

THE HOLY PANCHAKSHARA

PART THREE

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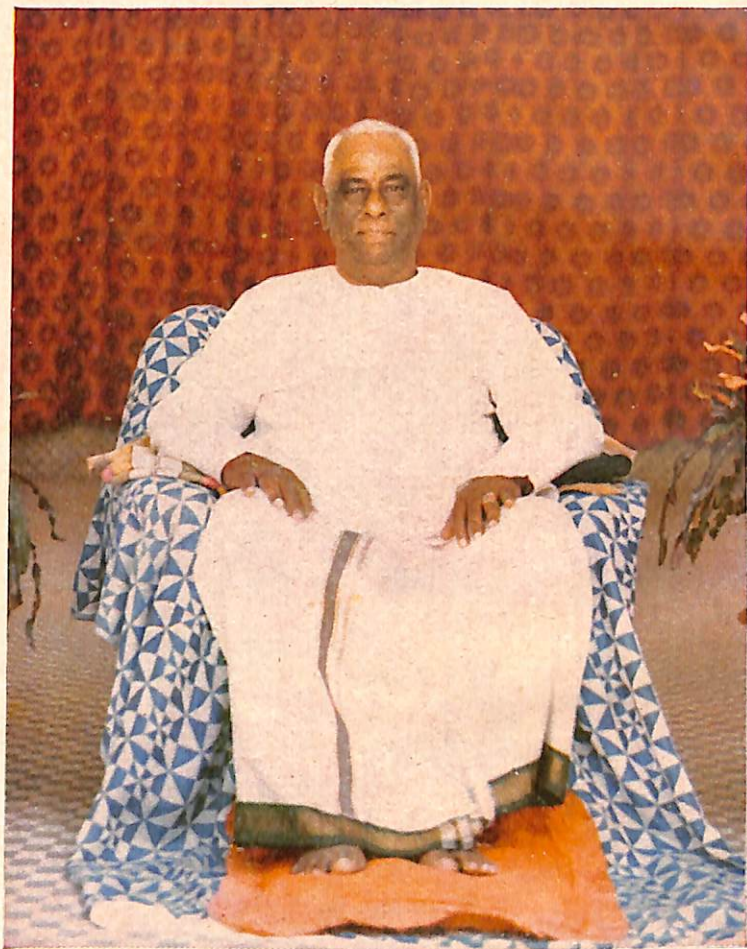
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SRI-LA-SRI PANRIMALAI SWAMIGAL

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THE HOLY PANCHAKSHARA

PART III

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Divine Articles Materialised by
H.H. SRI-LA-SRI PANDRIMALAI SAMIKAL

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THE HOLY
PANCHAKSHARA

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Since publishing "The Holy Panchakshara—Parts I & II"—By His Holiness Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Samikal, 15 more Divine Articles materialised by His Holiness Samikal are now presented in the book form "The Holy Panchakshara—Part III."

These Articles have appeared from time to time in "Bhavan's Journal" and "The Light of Pandrimalai." The Publisher is grateful to the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and the Editorial Board of "The Light of Pandrimalai" for permitting publication of these Articles.

The life and mission of His Holiness Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Samikal has been described in detail in Part I of "The Holy Panchakshara."

Samikal is a standing example of a Jeevan Mukta (Perfected Soul) in constant communion with Lord Sri Muruga, his Ishta Devata, whose Divine Grace permeates fully in him.

His holy mission is to alleviate the sufferings of humanity and to guide devotees and aspirants on the onward march for spiritual upliftment at the same securing their material well being also in the righteous way.

True to the Divine prediction before his birth, His Holiness bears various Divine birth-marks on his holy feet, palms and body.

On the sole of the left foot are seen the Divine marks of Sudarsana Chakra (the Wheel of Lord Sri Vishnu) and the Shakti Vel (Spear of Lord Sri Muruga) and on the sole of the right foot, the Chakra and the Conch (of Lord Sri Vishnu). The palm of the left hand bears the marks of Conch, Chakra, the Cock emblem of Lord Sri Muruga and Shakti Vel. On the right palm are the Conch, Chakra, the Flag of Lord Sri Muruga, Shadkonam and an inner Shakti Vel within a Vel. On his body the birth marks of Chakra on the right shoulder and the Conch on the left shoulder indicate Lord Sri Vishnu's Amsa. On his back the Flag and the Cock emblem of Lord Sri Muruga are imprinted. A tiny dot noticed during the birth, between the eye-brows, represents the "third eye" (of Lord Siva). Later, as he grew older and due to intense tapas and spiritual sadhana, this mark has grown much bigger and deeper for any one to see and revere.

These Divine Insignia proclaim that His Holiness has the Amsas of Siva, Shakti, Vishnu and Muruga all in him and is an Avatara Purusha.

His Holiness Samikal lays great store for temple worship. He has consecrated many temples in India by installing yantras for deities which release and radiate spiritual forces for the worshippers to derive great benefit.

In recent years, temples have been built and consecrated, under the guidance and directions of Samikal, in foreign countries also.

During 1976, His Holiness toured South Africa. There, at Natal, he installed Lord Sri Nataraja's idol with yantras and consecrated the temple.

The Hindu Temple Society of North America had the unique opportunity of approaching His Holiness for the

Construction of Lord Sri Ganesa's temple at New York and Lord Sri Venkateswara's temple at Pittsburgh. This project was inaugurated by Samikal at Hyderabad during 1974. After three years of puja for forty-two yantras divinely procured for these two temples, His Holiness was taken to United States during 1977. He performed the consecration of the New York temple on 4-7-1977 and the Pittsburg temple on 6-7-1977. During his stay in the United States, His Holiness performed the ground-breaking ceremony for Balaji's temple at Vappinger's Falls, Shakti's temple at Houston and Shakti's temple at Florida.

On his return journey to India, His Holiness did the consecration of Lord Sri Muruga's temple, in London, on 31-8-1977.

There is no doubt that these temples will become powerful centres of Divine forces that will result in the moral and spiritual upliftment and regeneration of mankind.

In the history of Divine Miracles and Siddhis, the immediate and instant materialisation of type-written articles in English on various topics of religious and spiritual import to gratify the desires of the devotees, is something unheard of. These articles materialised by His Holiness, Samikal, due to their very divine nature and background, would leave their indelible imprints on the sands of Time.

Such articles would also form a powerful spiritual substratum for educating and guiding the entire man-kind, without any distinctions of caste, creed, colour or status, towards leading a more purposeful and fuller life, here and now, established in Service, Truth, Love and everlasting Bliss.

While now presenting the Divine articles, a type-written message in English materialised by His Holiness for Dr. Peter Meyer Dhom, Vice-Chancellor and Rector, Rhur University, West Germany, on 17-1-1979, during the latter's visit to "OM NAMASIVAYAM" Ashramam to pay homage to His Holiness, has been included as a *fitting* "Foreword."

Dr. Dhom, whom His Holiness described as a person with intense faith in God, was taken to His Holiness by Thiru Nachiappan of Kalakshetra Publications, an ardent devotee and disciple of His Holiness. Thiru Nachiappan had apprised Dr. Dhom about the Samikal being a Siddha Purusha of the highest order and also about the astounding miracles he performs, not for praise or reward, but to demonstrate the unlimited potency and grace of God.

As soon as Dr. Dhom saw His Holiness, who for all external appearance looks an ordinary person, his mind was assailed with various doubts. The questions which arose in his mind were: "Who is this person attributed with so much of Divine powers but looking so simple and ordinary?"; "From where and what source he derives his powers."

Thiru Nachiappan made a humble request to His Holiness to materialise a Divine article in the presence of Dr. Dhom.

His Holiness supplicated to Lord Sri Muruga by a soulstirring song in Tamil, to vouchsafe an article to Dr. Dhom. The distinguished visitor was also asked offer his prayers to God for an article, which he did. Within an instant, a type-written sheet flew into the outstretched hands of His Holiness. This was handed over Dr. Dhom.

Thiru R. N. Sankaran, former Chief Engineer, Tamil Nadu Electricity Board and a devoted disciple of His Holiness, Thiru N. K. Srinivasan, Retd. Journalist, "Hindustan Times" of Bombay and Thiru N. S. Krishnamurthy, Branch Manager, State Bank of India, Wadala, Bombay, were also the recipients of the grace of His Holiness, who blessed them with the great opportunity to be present at the time of materialisation of the Divine Message.

This Message, adorning this book as its "Foreword", gives a clear and categorical answer to the questions which arose in the mind of Dr. Dhoni. It also powerfully conveys a revelation and message for the entire man-kind, which the Publisher sincerely desires and hopes, will be carefully read, pondered and acted upon, to secure their own happiness and well-being.

The Publisher is grateful to His Excellency Shri Prabhudas Patwari, the Governor of Tamil Nadu, for releasing this Holy Book, on the august occasion of the Birthday Celebration of His Holiness Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Samikal, on the 26th April 1979, at Madras.

Publisher
Pandrimalai Samikal Ashramam
"OM NAMASIVAYAM"
5, Village Road,
Nungambakkam, Madras-34

FOREWORD

Type-written message materialised by His Holiness Pandrimalai Samikal to Dr. Peter Meyer Dhom, Vice-Chancellor and Rector, Rhur University, West Germany, on 17-1-1979, during the latter's visit to 'OM NAMASIVAYAM', Ashram.

"I am omnipotent and omnipresent. Nothing moves in this world without me.

I dwell in the hearts of everyone, but only some peoples' mind are not with me, because their minds have been rusted by their deeds of sin. But, after I release them from their sentence of punishment, they will come to me openly. For, even now, they are not without thinking of me.

He, whom you see before you, is a priceless Sanjeevi whom I have sent into this world, to save mankind. If you see him, touch him or even think of him, all your sins will vanish and he will show you the way to attain me, Because, although I dwell in the hearts of everyone, I dwell in him more intensely than in any one of you.

Blessings to all those assembled here."

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THE IDEAL FOR ALL

(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal to satisfy the desire of his disciples)

The ideal of every human should be to attain oneness with Brahman. It is only given to human beings to reach that stage and affirm "Aham Brahmassmi!" Every one should therefore strive to achieve that position of perfection.

Valmiki, the sage who gave us the sacred Ramayana, questioned thus asking Naradha to name the ideal person in the world.

"Konvasmin tsaampratam Loke Gunavaankascha

Veeryavaan

Dharmagnascha Krutagnascha Satyavaakyo

Dhrudhavrataha?

Chaaritrenacha koyuktassarva bhooteshu ko Hitaha

Vidvaankaha Kassamarthascha Kaschaika

Priyadarsanaha?

Aatmavaanko Jitakrodho Dyutimaankonasooyakaha

Kasyabibhyati Devaascha Jaataroshasya Samyuge?"

He asked: "In this world who is the person who has praiseworthy qualities, who is brave, who knows Dharma, who does not forget the good done to him, who speaks the truth always, who is of firm and steady will and determination, who is of pure conduct following virtuous

tradition, who loves all beings with equal intensity, who is a scholar, who is an expert in work, who is of pleasing appearance at all times, who is bold and fearless, who has power to control anger, who shines with brilliance of appearance, who is free from jealousy and whose righteous wrath can even make the gods quake with fear?"

Naradha gave Sri Rama's name.

These sixteen qualities make the ideal man. He will then be one with godhead-Rama.

These qualities can be cultivated by every one in society. Every one must realise his responsibility in life and act firmly without swerving from the path of duty prescribed for him.

For Prajarajya to function effectively, it is absolutely necessary that the above ideal qualities become the property of every individual.

These qualities can be engendered in the people at all stages of development in human life.

The child can be reared in a pure environment by ideal parents and ideal teachers.

The public can be educated and put on the dharmic path by the modern potent weapon of the newspaper and by other media of mass communication like the Radio, Television and so on. The newspaper plays a vital part in shaping public opinion and maintaining public moral standards. Whatever is good to the people must be voiced forth without fear or favour by the editors of the newspapers whose sacred duty it is to foster the ideals

of human life. They have to focus the attention of the people on the relevant things for making life godly and blissful. They have to create in the public love for all and hatred towards none, irrespective of caste, creed, race or colour.

They have to work for the welfare of humanity with a dedicated sense of duty. They should know that Yogah consists in performing one's duty in an expert way: "Yogah karmasu kousalam!"

They should not lend themselves to the manipulations of careerish selfish politicians. They should expose the wrongdoers and point out the viruses that harm society and destroy its moral structure.

The ideal is set forth by the sage Valmiki for all humans for all time. Lord Rama is the typical example of the ideal. Let everyone attempt to realise that ideal. Then surely Ramarajya will come into being.

In Ramarajya there was no disease, no fear, no widowhood, no theft, no famine and no untoward events. There was no situation where the elders had to perform obsequies to their young ones.

All people were happy.

*"Sarvam muditamevaaseet sarve Dharmaparobhavad
Ramamevaanupasyante naabhyahimsan parasparam".*

Thinking of Rama people gave up quarrels and enmities. They gave up harming each other. Every one followed the path of Dharma.

Let every one try to create this Ramarajya.

Let the rulers bear in mind that as they are, so will the people be. They have to ensure that Dharma prevails and people live in peace without fear.

Let all gird up their loins and work in co-operation for the establishment of this kingdom of heaven on earth.

Our Upanishads embody the above ideas.

They pronounce "Daiveeswastirastunaha! Swastir-maanushebyaha! Ooorthvam Jigatu bheshajam! Sam 'no astue Dwipade! Sam Chatushpade! Om Saantissantihil!"

They pray for the well being of the gods, the human beings, the two legged creatures and the four-legged ones-all of them.

Not only that.

They say, "Sahanaavavatu, Sahanaubhunaktu Saha-veeryamkaravaavahai, tejasvinaavadheetamastu, maavid-wishaavahai!"

All knowledge shall be obtained between people with free intermingling in living, feeding, working and learning, thus obtaining enlightenment with brilliance and without any trace of ill-will creeping in between the participants in this sacred venture.

It is therefore the bounden duty of all to pursue the above ideals set forth above and particularly the responsibility of those who control the eyes and ears of mankind through news media.

GOPALA KRISHNA

(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-la-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples).

*Avatarassatvanye Sarasijanayanasya Sarvatobhadraha
Krishnadanyah Kova prabhavati Go Gopa Gopika
muktyai?*

Many are the incarnations of the Lord for the welfare and bliss of all; but is there any one like that of Lord Krishna who had blessed and given the nectar of his kindness freely to the cows, cowherds, the Gopees and their children in plenty leading them to salvation? There is none. Lord Krishna is verily Gopala Krishna. He is the Lord of the cowherds—their friend, philosopher, guide and protector. The innocent cows had their fill of the Lord's charming presence and had their heaven with him. From the time the Lord was transferred by Vasudeva to the bedside of Yasoda, the wife of Nanda Gopa in Vrajapura, the place and its environs became charming and delightful with fruitful vegetation, plentiful milkgiving by the cows and with every natural phenomenon shining with extraordinary effulgence.

Vrajapura became the seat of health, wealth and prosperity. The people loved the Lord and Balarama his brother. Unless and until they kissed the two children, none of the house- wives of Vrajapura went to bed. The purpose of Lord's stay in Vrajapura as the son of Nanda Gopa was not

merely to survive the vileness of Kamsa or to satisfy the boon given to Nanda Gopa and his wife in their previous birth. He wanted to give the longest rope to the most vicious Kamsa to see whether he could be redeemed by change of heart after seeing the futility of his trials before his ultimate annihilation.

Kamsa sent Pootana, Trinavarta and others to kill Lord Krishna in vain. These incidents disturbed the minds of Nanda Gopa and people under him. They thought that it would be better for them to go and settle at some place well beyond the reach of Kamsa at Mathura. But they were reluctant to leave their native place. Suddenly one day a swarm of wolves attacked their cattle. Many calves were killed. They were alarmed at it and at once decided on leaving the place forthwith. They shifted to Brindavan farther away from Mathura. It was the ruse of the Lord to make them go to comparative safety and security. Brindavan became a Second Swarga as it were.

But even here Kamsa's minions followed them. Aghasura, Vatsasura, Bakasura—each came with intent to make short work of the Lord, who, of course, killed them outright. The divinity and invincibility of the Lord was not yet realised by Kamsa. No wonder. For even Brahma, the Creator, was prompted to test the divinity of the Lord and was chastened when the Lord assumed the shape of all the cowherd boys and the calves whom he had hidden in a cave.

Lord Krishna now attained the sixth year of age. He was therefore allowed by the elders to look after the grazing of the grown-up cows in the place of mere calves. He and Balarama trod new fields. The latter killed

Dhenukasura, the owner of a palmyra grove and a giant. The place became safer for the Gopalas thereafter.

The Lord was now actuated by a desire to test the sincerity of devotion and love of the residents of Brindavan and at the same time rid that place of a poisonous pest. A gigantic serpent called Kaleeya was in a puddle in the Jamuna River and made it dangerous and harmful for the people. The Lord went there and jumped into it. At once the huge serpent coiled round him. The cowherd boys were dazed at what they saw. They were horror stricken. They raised a hue and cry and the elders from Brindavan came there at breakneck speed. They were stunned at what they found. Many swooned on seeing the terrifying sight. Yasoda was in the act of rushing into the water despite efforts of others preventing her from doing so. The able-bodied among them were trying to come to him. The cows bellowed miserably. On seeing this the Lord's heart melted. He expanded his body enormously, He freed himself from the coils of the serpent and began to dance upon its hoods. The serpent felt itself to be in the throes of death. It was helpless and blood oozed out. The wives of the serpent prayed to the Lord for mercy towards their husband. Krishna took pity on them. He ordered the serpent to leave the place. It need not be afraid of Garuda, the king of birds, who would leave it free as it had the imprints of the Lord's feet on its hoods. The serpent left the place along with retinue. The residents of Brindavan were in great joy when they saw Lord Krishna free from the poisonous Kaleeya. The Jamuna became safe for them. They were overawed by the Lord's feat. In another exploit Pralambasura was killed by Balarama. Lord Krishna saved the cowherds when they were surrounded by a wild fire in

the forest. He asked them to shut their eyes and at once transported them to a safe place in a trice. He protected the Gopalas at all times and under all circumstances. He engaged them one day with his magic flute and filled them with great bliss. The music charmed them. They left all their work and came to him. The Gopikas rushed there. They were overpowered by the irresistible melody of the flute. Lord Krishna at Venugana surrounded by all the residents of Brindavan was full of grace and charm.

*Brindavanadrumataleshu gavangeshu Vedavasana
samyeshucha drusyateyat
Tadvenuvadana param Sikhinchachoodam Brahma
smarami Kamalekshana-mabhraneelam.*

I meditate on that Lord who is attainable by the Vedas moving amidst the fields of Brindavan and charming the people with the sweetness of the music of his flute. I contemplate on the bluebodied cloudlike Lord with the crown of the feathers of the peacock.

The Lord found one day that the people making festive preparations. He was told that they were going to perform Indrotsava to propitiate the Lord of Heaven and get rains for effective and fruitful farming. Lord Krishna wanted to focus the attention of his father and the elders on the need to worship the Universal Spirit in the manifested forms instead of on fractional powers like Indra. He told them: "The cows are our life-givers. They are our property. It is meet that we should worship only those that protect us and contribute to our nourishment. It is sheer ingratitude to worship some one else while receiving benefits from others and ungrateful wretches cannot prosper at all. We are getting our sustenance from our cows and

the Govardhana mountain. Let us perform worship to them and feed all creatures and human beings without any distinction of caste or creed, Brahmin or Chandala and all animals, dog or bitch. By thus satisfying all the God-made creation, we will be satisfying God achieving spiritual and mundane benefits thereby".

The advice given by the Lord implies that the worship of the manifested forms of the Lord in the world is proper for the common people who would not be able to contemplate on the Absolute like the people who are highly advanced in intellect. In pursuance of the Lord's instructions, Nanda Gopa and his followers performed the worship of the cows and the Govardhana Mountain. Learned votaries of the Brahman held sacrificial fires. Cows were decorated, worshipped and given plenty of grass. All people from the lowest to the highest were sumptuously fed. Sacrifices were offered to the Mountain which was brilliantly lit with lights for three days. The whole atmosphere was blissful with the Lord moving here, there and everywhere. There were festivities and dinners galore.

This however enraged Indra who felt it a sacrilege. He ordered the Clouds under his control to roar and rain cats and dogs. "Let the fools be taught a lesson", said he. Loud were the wails of the people. Some elders repented of their action and inwardly prayed to Indra to protect them promising to atone for their folly. The Gopals surrendered completely to Lord Krishna. The Lord took up the challenge of Indra and decided to teach him a lesson.

He asked the people not to be afraid. He was there to save them. He held aloft the Govardhana Mountain

balancing it on his little finger and beckoned to all of them to come under it with all their cattle and belongings. All the men, women and children got under the mountain as they knew the prowess of the Lord and were sure of their safety. Indra showed his full might to no purpose. It rained heavily for seven days and nights without interval. But nothing happened to the Gopalas. Indra then found by his occult eye that the Lord was there protecting them in all his glory and splendour. Gone was his pride and anger. He supplicated before the Lord and fell on his feet before him saying: "O Lord! Forgive me. I was full of ego and believed myself to be all-powerful. You have taught me a good lesson. You are the Ultimate. You are born to annihilate the proud and the wicked harassers of people. Have mercy on me".

The Lord forgave him and said: "No one should have pride. Power madness and pride of title will not do. They should be rooted out. Worship must be animated by devotion. That got by fear and promise of return benefits is useless. How can you administer Justice with such an unseemly feeling? Your action shows that you expect returns from the people for what you do for them. You have to rule wisely. Be humble and do so." The celestial Kamadhenu poured milk on the Lord and also the holy water of the Ganges was brought by the celestial elephant Iravata. The Lord was anointed and sacred baths were given to him. He was proclaimed as Govinda, the protector of the cows. Everything became calm and the sun came up in full power. All the people came from under the mountain. They were in an ecstatic state. They paid their respects to the Lord. Such of the elders as had doubted his ability to protect them became truly penitent and said to him: "We are guilty of having had misgivings

about you. We are ashamed of ourselves. We do not know who you are. Even the Devas cannot perform this feat. You are our only refuge. We do our obeisance to you. Please forgive us". The Lord smiled and said: "I am not alien to you. I am one among you. Do not have any feeling other than the feeling of love towards me. Do not praise me". The elders hailed him as their saviour and called him. "Gopala Krishna".

His advice to the Gopas had the seeds of his later teaching to Arjuna on the battle field of Kurukshetra in the Vibhuti Yoga. Arjuna asked the Lord:

*Katham vidyamaham yogimstvam sada parichintayan
Keshu keshu cha bhavashu chintayosi Bhagavanmaya?*

O Lord of the Yogins! how can I perceive you and what are the objects and forms on which I can contemplate? What is the modus operandi?

The Lord gave out then the principal objects and forms in which his grace permeated so as to enable the humanity at large to meditate on that aspect that was suited to his or her ability. He gave out Seventyone Vibhutis or forms of grace of his and asked Arjuna not to attempt to follow all of them but to pursue one object only. For the Lord is all pervading and wherever an object is in full glory allotted for its species he should conclude that the Lord is there in one aspect.

He said:

*Yadyadvibhutimatsattvam Srimadoorjitamevava
Tattadevavagacchatvam Mamatejomsasambhavan.*

That was why the Lord enjoined upon the cowherds to worship their cattlewealth and the luxuriant and brilliant

Govardhana Mountain. The Gopas were made to behave as normally as before and they went by their avocations as before. They were indeed blessed. Blessed indeed we will be if we pray to him:

Pasupalabalaparishadvibhushanam Sisuresha

Seetalavilola lochanaha

Mrudulasmitardra vadanendusampadamadayan-

madeeya hrudayam Vigahate!

The Lord surrounded by the cowherd boys and enjoying their company bestowing his cool and graceful looks on them and benignly smiling on them with affection and love shall pervade me.

THAYUMANAVAR

(Vouchsafed to my adiyaan Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples)

The Lord is the Divine Mother and Father in one. He is Thayum Anavar—one who is also the mother. That is why, He is prayed to as Umamaheswara or Ardhanareeswara.

*"Prapulla Neelotpala Lochanaaya!
Vikaasa Pankeruha Lochanaaya!
Jagajjananyai Jagadeka Pitre
Namassivaayaicha Namassivaaya!"*

Prayers are offered to the one, of the eyes of the tint of the blue Utpala flower and of the eyes of the broad and fullblown Lotus, who is both the Mother and the Father of the Universe, Sivaa and Siva.

The grace of the Lord who is Thayumanavar is infinite and blissful. He gave the world the great saint Thayumanavar Swami who brought out the finest concepts of Saiva Siddhanta to the fore and sang about Siva as "*Akhandā Sacchidaananda Sivam*" and Sakti as the Supreme Goddess or Paraa constituting an inseparable entity with essential unity. Kediliappa Pillai was the father of Thayumanavar. He was a Vellala by caste and lived at Vedaranyam. He was very pious. He was a great and accomplished scholar in both Sanskrit and Tamil and was highly respected by all for his learning

and saintly conduct. He was one of the ministers of Vijaya Raghunatha Chokkalinga Naicker, the grandson of Tirumala Naicker of Madurai, who ruled at Tiruchirappalli between 1627 and 1657. Longing for a son, he and his wife offered vows to the boon giving deity Thayumanavar of the famous temple at Thirusiramalai. The Lord was pleased to bless them with a son whom they named after the Lord Himself as Thayumanavar.

Thayumanavar was a precocious child and he became well versed in both Sanskrit and Tamil. He attained the pinnacle of glory by his wisdom and scholarship as well as his pleasing behaviour and personal charm.

He mastered the spiritual lore and studied the philosophical classics in both Tamil and Sanskrit. He could use both the languages with dexterity and deep meaning like Savyasachi using both his hands in shooting arrows with agility and vigour. He became the very personification of culture. His personal popularity and reputation was so great that the king made him minister soon after the passing away of Kediliappa Pillai, though at that time he was only fourteen years old. Deeply religious and philosophical in outlook and attitude, Thayumanavar pined for a Guru to give him initiation to asceticism. By chance he came into contact with a great saint and yogic expert called Arunanthi Sivacharya who was famous as Mouna Guruswami. The latter lived at a mutt at Chidambaram. He was a disciple of Tirumala Nayanar, the author of Tirumantiram, and also of Meikkandar. He reached Tiruchirappalli and was in deep meditation in the temple on the Rock at the place. Thayumanavar was drawn to him as iron to a magnet and became his disciple. He prayed to the Guru for initiation to the ascetic order of life. But the Guru did not give

any reply. Thayumanavar was not willing to stop his efforts. He persisted. He left his vocation and followed the Mouna Guru. At last the latter told him that he would do well to master Sivagnana Bodham. So saying the Guru taught him the main teachings of Suddhadwaita Saiva Siddhanta. Thayumanavar was not satisfied. He hungered for immediate initiation into Sannyasa. But the Guru said: "*Chumma Iru*" (Keep quiet). This was a revelation to Thayumanavar. He found that he should not be restless but should concentrate first on equipping himself with the essential knowledge that could form the base, yogic meditation. For everything there is an appropriate time or *Samuchita Samaya*. *Sanganiriyana* or casting away of all worldly ties and attachments could come only after prior burnishing of physical and spiritual attitudes and aptitudes. The divine quality in one could come into the fore only then. The dictum: "*Chumma Iru*" acted as a talisman on him. He carried on his mundane affairs unaffected by the events around him. He concentrated his mind all the while on the Existence-Intellegence-Bliss; *Sacchidananda Sivam*. He continued his spiritual sadhana with the permission of the king. Then an incident happened which proved his mastery over the Indriyas. The reigning king died and the widowed queen, Meenakshi Ammai, proposed to marry him. This act of hers disgusted Thayumanavar who left the place and settled at Thevai near Ramnad.

After some time he married and became a householder on the insistence of his uncle and other relatives. A son was born to him. Soon after that his wife died. Now came the turning point in his life. His Guru came to him now and gave him initiation to asceticism. He became a Sannyasin. He travelled from one place of pilgrimage to

another. He visited all the temples in the South and went to Varanasi or Kasi. His heart was full of compassion for humanity. When he visited Rameswaram, he found that the people there suffered actually on account of drought and famine due to total failure of rains. His heart melted. He prayed to Lord Siva, his patron deity who was both Mother and Father in one. His prayers were heard and the place was saved.

He wrote many hymns and poems praising the Lord and the Mother. He praised Sakti or the Universal Mother who is the Supreme Brahman manifest as Force and worshipped at Thevai as Malai Valar Kadali or the Highland Maid. In his *Ananda Kalippu*, with the refrain for his songs as "*Sankara, Sankara, Sambhu Siva*" he portrayed Madhura Bhakti. He pictured the Soul as the Lover and the Lord as the Beloved. The Soul stripping itself of the pairs of opposites, ridding itself of Ahankara, unites with the Lord singing and dancing its way finally being taught the path of knowledge. He posited that the Soul and the Paramatman are only apparently distinct though there is in reality no duality.

In his song "*Iniyethemakk-un-arul*", he prayed for the grace of the Lord, the Sarvavyapi, who is the Existence-Intelligence-Bliss. He exclaimed whether his body should be unjustly the slave of the demon "I" and whether all the virtues attained by him through learning and listening, singing and dancing, of the praise of Him were all to become fruitless. In another song: "*Ippiravi-Yenum-Ore*" he completely surrendered himself to the Lord's mercy stating that he had fallen into the ocean of birth, caught in the mouth by the crocodile of Ahankara, buffeted by the waves of pairs of opposites, wafted and held up by the whirlwind of lust for women, lost the power

of discrimination, became devoid of the lifesaving boat of selfrealisation and lost the balance of reason. He said: "*Tvameva Maataacha Pitaatvameva, Tvameva Bandhuscha Sakha Tvameva, Tvameva Vidyaa Dravinam Tvameva, Tvameva Sarvam Mama Devadeva*".

The Lord was his everything. His poems are punctuated with intense divine fervour. His poems "*Karunakara Kadavul*", "*Sacchidananda Sivam*" and "*Thejomayanandam*" contain abstract philosophy. Boldly he deals with the subject with all authority. His poems like *Perianayaki Virutham, Parapara Kanni, Paingilikanni, Ennatkanni, Nirkunilai, Arul Iyalbu, Porul Iyalbu, Ananda Iyalbu* and the like deal with all affairs, worldly and otherworldly, with good popular appeal and charm. Thayumanavar was the very personification of Sat-Chit-Ananda and he used the skill of the Muse to preach the gospel of Samatva or equality of all, as everything and everyone are existent only on account of Lord Siva who is Sarvaantaryaami. He maintained that the worship of the Lord in the temples through ritualistic and other procedures is proper and that the Archa form of the Lord is the most powerful instrument for singleminded and concentrated devotion to the Lord. He wanted everyone to develop the right attitude towards the pleasures and glories of nature, taking part in all of them as ordained in the scriptures with implicit faith in the immense and infinite mercy of the Lord Thayumanavar. He had the blessings of that deity in full and he conveyed them to all who came to him for enlightenment and succour. He had many devoted disciples like Arulaiyar and Kodikarai Jnaniar. He succeeded in showing to the world the proper relation in which the individual soul should stand towards Nature, Society and God. His life and teachings are an object lesson to all.

SRI KANYAKA PARAMESWARI

(Vouchsafed to Aassan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples.)

*Taamagnivarnaam Tapasaajwalanteem
Vairochaneem Karmaphaleshujushtaam
Durgaam Deveem Saranamaham
Prapadye Sutarasitarase namaha!*

O Devi: You are shining with the evere form of Agni, the Fire-god, You are burning away the enemies without exception by your brilliance. Those that desire things get all their desires fulfilled only by worshipping you. You are alongside of Lord Parameswara. O Durga, the destroyer of all bad states, we surrender unto you. We seek your protection. You are the life boat to ferry us over the Ocean of Samsara.

The Devi prayed to here was born in the world as Sri Kanyaka Parameshwari or Sri Vasavamba to furnish an ideal for maidenhood and ennoble the Vysya Community making them set to follow model lives of purity in thought, word and deed. That is why prayer is offered to her in the following manner:

*Sree Vasaveem Kanyakaambaam
Jnanasiddhi Pradaayineem
Arya Vysya Kulodhaatreem
Sukhadaam Taam Namaamyaham*

Salutation is offered to Sri Vasavi Devi, Sri Kanyakamba, who bestows on the devotees all Jnana and all Siddhis. She is the river of all bliss. She is the burnisher of the Arya Vysya Caste whose prosperity is assured by her for all time to come.

Her Leela in the world was a saga of bravery, self-sacrifice, filial duty and unflinching obedience to the decision of elders. She was born to the Setti Raja, Sri Kusuma Sreshti who plied his vocation in Penukonda of modern Godavari District, one of the 18 prominent towns where the descendants of Vysya Sreshtis that came down from Kailasa resided. Kusuma Sreshti was a precious flower among the Sreshtis and his wife Sri Kusumamba was a flower of equal fragrance. To both these Kusumas or flowers was born the greatest Kusuma or flower, Parameshwari, the divine consort of Lord Siva. She was born to them after they had performed the Putra Kameshti sacrifice. A brother was also born and he was called Virupaksha.

Her parents were told by Lord Siva that the Universal Mother Durga was going to be born to them to add to their glory, make their names famous for all time and give them salvation. They were immensely pleased with their good fortune.

Sri Vasavamba, as she was called, was always of the mind of the Universal Lord who was manifest as Sri Nagareswara Swami in Penukonda Temple. She used to go to the temple daily to worship the lord. Her beauty was indescribable.

The Settirajas had their own control over their towns. Time went on happily for them until one day when

Vishnuvardhana who ruled at Rajahmundry came to their parts. He was welcomed by Sri Kusuma Sreshti and other elders and given lavish hospitality as befitting a King of his standing.

As fate would have it, his eye fell upon the beautiful virgin Sri Vasavamba. He fell in love with her at once having been captivated by her unrivalled beauty. Learning that she was the daughter of Sri Kusuma Sreshti, he sent his minister Vijayasimha to negotiate the matter. Sri Kusuma Sreshti was in a fix. Using however his presence of mind he intimated that he would let the King know about it after consulting his kith and kin. He thought of evading the issue to be settled when the King was in his capital.

After the King left the place, a concourse of the elders of the community was held to decide as to what was to be done. Sri Bhaskaracharya, the caste Guru, said that it was not proper for them to go outside their caste. They should maintain the purity of the caste and Gotra. They should try to reason with the King and convey him to their opinion. They should decide on their further course after their envoys returned from the capital with the King's reaction.

The King was furious when he found that the Setti-rajās were averse to his proposals. He thundered saying that he would destroy all the Vysyas of the towns if needed to achieve his purpose. He would take the bride by force. All methods to prevail upon him failed.

So the Vysyas all gathered together at Penukonda and took counsel. It was resolved that the elders of all

the Vysya families should sacrifice their lives by burning themselves in firepits rather than sully their tradition, and lose chastity and purity of their caste. The decision was conveyed to the Devi Sri Vasavamba.

She revealed her true form to her parents and said that she was not ordained to marry any frail mortal. Their decision was correct and in keeping with her resolve. They should prepare a firepit for her also. As for the King, he would reap the consequence of his foolishness. She further said that the families of the elders that followed her example would have salvation and their progeny would be prosperous and happy for all time to come under her protective aegis. She said that every one should obey the parents, the Guru and the elders to attain her grace.

Her firm resolve was made known to the elders of the families. Among them only the elders of 102 Gotras were prepared to immolate themselves along with her, while those belonging to the remaining 612 Gotras were afraid to do so and did not follow suit.

A date was intimated to the King for the marriage. On the day previous to that preparations were made for the Great Sacrifice. Sri Vasavambika was married in great pomp to Sri Nagareswara Swami. The firepits were got ready.

The Devi said before she entered fire that the wicked King would die on setting foot in the town with his head broken to pieces. She urged upon the people to be pure, chaste and and godly. She called upon the Creator Brahman not to create beautiful female children in the caste in which she was born. Then she entered the fire pit separately dug for her. The other 102 families

followed her glorious example with their elders entering the firepits.

The next day Vishnuvardhana came there with his retinue to marry the bride. On learning about the grand tragic sacrifice, he was stunned and he fell down from his elephant as a result of which his head broke into pieces. He thus died a tragic death as foretold by the Devi. His dead body with the pieces of the severed head was taken to Rajahmundry where his son Raja Raja Narendra performed the funeral rites to him.

Then in order to placate the citizens of Penukonda he appointed Virupakasha, the brother of Sri Vasavamba, as the Setti Leader of the place and assured them all of his patronage and goodwill.

The members of the 102 Gotras performed the funeral rites for their elders and erected a temple for Sri Vasavamba whom they regarded as their caste deity. They called her Kanyaka Parameswari or Kanyakamba, the Virgin Goddess. They became the Arya Vysya or the Revered among the Vysya Community. The Vysyas at other places also erected temples for her and worshipped her.

She is the Goddess who is All-merciful and who is administering the affairs of all that worship her bestowing all riches and happiness upon them. She is Sarva Mangala or Goddess Parvati, the auspicious Mother, and prayers are offered to her by all irrespective of caste, creed or colour.

Let us surrender ourselves to Her.

GEETASARAM

*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai
Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples.)*

*"Agre krutvaa kamapi charanam jaanunaikena
tishthan
Paschaat Paartham pranayarasajushaa
chakshushaavekshyamaanah
Savyetotram karasarasije dakshine Jnaanamudraa—
Maabhibraano rathamadhivasan Paatu
nassootaveshah!"*

The Lord in the garb of the charioteer as he sat on his knee looking with loving eyes at Arjuna to his left, holding the reins of the horses with one hand and having the other hand in the posture exuding Jnaana, shall protect us.

In this posture on the battlefield of Kurukshetra the Lord, out of mercy and love for all, gave out the Song Celestial, Sreemadbhagawatgeeta, making Arjuna the vehicle for spreading the divine message leading to attainment of Brahman. The Geeta is the Open Sesame for efforts to attain self-realisation.

The quintessence of Geeta in Geetasara is found enunciated in the *Paaraayankrama* or the discerned procedure prescribed by the devout for its study. It is regarded as a *Mantramaala* or garland of Mantras. Having been uttered by the Lord himself it has divine sanction and unbounded power in putting one on the path of salvation

when studied and contemplated upon regularly with devotion and love. For every Mantra there is a Rishi or the Seer who has realised God through it. The Rishi who has brought out this *Bhagavadgeetamala Mantra* is the great sage Veda Vyasa, who is himself an Amshaa-vataara of Lord Vishnu.

*"Vyaasaaya Vishnuroopaaya
Vyaasaroopaaya Vishnave
Namo vai Brahmanidhaye
Vaasishtaaya Namoh namah!"*

Prayers are offered to the sage Veda Vyasa who is Lord Vishnu himself and who is the storehouse of Brahman's energy. He has chronicled this soul-stirring peroration of Lord Sri Krishna to Arjuna to make him realise his duty in the establishment of Dharma in the world. The sage has made this public with a liberal mind to benefit the entire humanity and that is why he is addressed as "*Vishaala-buddhe!*" He wants the whole universe to profit from this divine knowledge propounded directly by the Lord. It is given in *Anushtubh* metre for the most part.

The *Devata* or deity invoked in this *Malamantra* is Lord Krishna who had come into the world with the avowed purpose of establishing Dharma or right rule of conduct and justice. As such this *Mantramala* has a uniqueness not had by any other Mantra. All *shastras* reveal that the only Lord to be contemplated upon and prayed to is Lord Narayana alone.

*"Aalodya sarvoshaatraani vichaaryacha punahpunah
Idamevam sunishpannam dhyeya Naaraayanah sadaa!"
Ekopi Krishnasya krutah pranaamo Dashaashvame-
dhaavabruthena tulyah*

*Dashaashvamedhee punareti janmo Krishnapranaamee
napunarbhavaaya!"*

Prostrating once before Lord Krishna will bestow the punya accruing to one who performs ten horse-sacrifices. But while the performer of the horse-sacrifice be born again, there is no rebirth at all for one who prostrates before Lord Krishna. That Glorious Lord is propitiated by this *Malamantra* easily.

For this Mantra the *Beeja* or the seed, the root cause for its exposition is the line: "*Ashochayaanavashochastvam, Prajnaavaadaamscha Bhaashase!*" (the first line of Sloka 11 in the second adhyaya). The Lord was provoked to give rise to this tree of divine knowledge under which one can get spiritual peace and enlightenment by Arjuna who was overcome by undue sorrow and unwarranted compassion towards those assembled before him and spoke words as if he were wise and knew everything. Arjuna was overcome by a delusion. He thought he was killing his kith and kin, thereby committing a heinous crime. He therefore felt impelled to renounce his weapons and allow the opponents even to kill him as he did not want to enjoy the fruits of a bloodbath of his elders and relatives. He forgot the eternal truth that "he" was not the killer and the others were not "killed" by him as the Soul is eternal and indestructible. The arrogance of "I" overtook Arjuna and the Lord wanted to take out his mind from the mire into which it had fallen and cleanse it.

He wanted Arjuna to realise the duty cast upon him. This is evident from the question put by the Lord to Arjuna after Geetopadesa: "*Kacchidajnaana Sammohah Pranashtaste?*"—"Has the delusion brought about by

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your ignorance been dispelled?" and the reply given by Arjuna:

"Nashto mohah smrutirlabdhah

Tvatprasaadaanmayaachyuta!

Sthitosmi gatasandehah Karishye vachanam Tava!"

"The delusion of mine is rooted out. I have regained consciousness of the eternal Atmatattva by your grace, O Lord Achyuta! I shall carry out your behest". Here Arjuna completely surrendered to the Lord after the realisation of the truth that all things are ordained by the Lord and he was only an instrument in the process. Thus the false apprehension of Arjuna who became full of Ego arrogating to himself the power of destruction of the enemies prompted the Lord to give out the Geeta. He granted the essential divine wisdom to Partha to get over this pretension.

The *Sakti* or sole power of this *Geetamantramala* is in the merciful declaration of the Lord: "*Sarva Dharmaan parityajya Maamekam sharanam vraja!*"—Let go those rites and duties. Take refuge in Me alone!—This is *Geetasara*. This is *Geetarahasya*. The message of the Geeta is that one should throw himself at the mercy of the Lord without any reserve. Salvation is sure thereby. The Lord himself has given this easiest way to attain Him.

The *Keelaka* or shelter of the *Geetamantramala* lies in the divine assurance of his citing the virtue of such a wholehearted surrender unto him in the next line to the one quoted above: "*Aham tvaasarva paapebhyo mokshaishyaami maa shuchah!*"—I shall free thy soul. Be of good cheer. This categorical affirmation of his protection

to one who surrenders unto him whole hog forms the chief message of the Geeta.

The Greeta teaches that *Prapatti* or *Sharanagati* to the Lord is the only sovereign means to attain the lotus feet of the Lord.

Reading of the *Geetamantramala* has to be performed with great care and loving devotion. The whole body and mind must be kept attuned to the consciousness that the soul is indestructible and the Lord is the sole refuge. So in *Karanyasa* and *Anganyasa* the lines of the following slokas are to be uttered one after the other in order while touching the fingers and parts of the body:

"Nainam cchindanti Sastraani, nainam dahati

Paavakah

*Na chainam kledayantyaapo, na shoshayati Maarutah
Acchedyoyamadaahyoyamakledyo shoshya Evacha
Nityah sarvagatahsthaanurachaloyam sanaatanah!*

(Slokas 23 & 24 of the Second Adhyaya)

*Pashya me Paartha roopaani satashotha sahahrashah
Naanaavidhaani divyaani, naanaa varnaakruteenicha!"*

(Sloka 5 of the eleventh Adhyaya)

"Weapons have no effect on the soul. Flame cannot burn it. Waters cannot overwhelm it. The dry winds cannot wither it. It is impenetrable, unentered, unassailed, unharmed, untouched, immortal, all-arriving, stable and sure. This thought should pervade the whole being of the aspirant and he should contemplate on the divine vision of the Lord saying to Arjuna: "Gaze, then, thou son of Pritha! I manifest for thee those thousand shapes that clothe my mystery! I show thee all my semblances.

infinite, rich, divine; my changeful hues and my countless forms”.

With this glorious vision of the Lord illuminating the mind, one should resolve: “*Sri Krishna preetyartham paathe viniyogah!*”—I am delving into the Geeta to propitiate Lord Sri Krishna.

Then he should proceed to read the *Geetamantramala*.

Thus the Geeta preaches the *Sharanagati* tattva above all to every one. It has of course posited how one can attain godhead according to his inherent capacities through *Karma yoga*, *Jnana yoga* or *Sanyasa yoga*. But the easiest and shortest way to have the blissful vision of the Lord and attain salvation is in one's total surrender to the Lord and performing Bhakti to him leaving everything in his tender and loving care. This is the quintessence of the Geeta carrying the sanction of the Lord.

SRI APPAR

*(Vouchsafed to my Adiyaan Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri
Pandrimalai Swamighal to satisfy the desire of his disciples)*

*"Namo Bhakta bhavacchedakaaranaayaamalaatmane
Kaalakaalaaya Kaalaaya Kaalaateetaayatenamaha
Jitendriyaaya Nityaaya Jitakrodhaayatenamaha
Namahpaashandabhangaaya Namahpaapaharaayate!"*

"Salutations are offered to Lord Siva, the destroyer of the Lord of Death, the Time Spirit and the One beyond Time who frees his devotees from the tentacles of births and deaths and who is the Pure Atman. Worship is made to him who has controlled the senses and conquered anger. He is the curber of all nonbelievers and fanatics and wipes out all sins. I salute him". Lord Siva's glory praised above could be seen in the divine life of his sterling devotee Tirunavukkarasu or Vageesa Nayanar known widely as Sri Appar. He ranks equally with the famous devotees Tiru Gnana Sambandhar and Sri Sundaramoorthy Nayanar who were highly blessed by the Lord. Tirunavukkarasu was quite a saint of the highest order and he felt himself animated by the Lord. He was like the devotee who prayed:

*"Mahaadeva Sambho Gireesa Trisoolin Tvayeedam
samastam vibhateeti yasmaat
Sivaadanyathaa Daivatam naabhijaane Sivoham
Sivoham Sivoham!"*

He felt that Mahadeva or Sambhu, the Lord of Parvati, wielding the Trisul is the lighter of everything and the giver of all prosperity. There was no other God for him except Lord Siva. He felt he was permeated by Siva. In his *Tevarams* or hymns of praise of the Lord he said that the Lord Sankara who had the senses under control had burnt out his sins and made him sattwic so that his mind thus purified had been able to realise the glorious form of that Lord who made the sages wise and made him know *Para Tattva*.

He was born to a pious couple who lived in the village of Tiruvarur in Munaippadu region of South India. His father was called Pugalanar and his mother Madiniyar; they were staunch devotees of Lord Siva. They had a daughter called Tilakavati and then Tirunavukkarasu was born. He was given the name Marulneekkiyar. He was very intelligent and learnt the sastras and other branches of study with ease. In the meantime Tilakavati came of age and her parents decided to give her in marriage to Kalippahayar, the commander of the king's forces and an ardent devotee of the Lord. While terms were being negotiated for the marriage, a war broke out and Kalippahayar had to take part in it. So he went out to perform his duty. Here Pugalanar died of sickness and his wife consigned herself to the flames as a Pativrata. To add *fuel to the fire*, Kalippahayar died in the battle. Tilakavati felt that as he was her intended husband she should also commit *sahagamana*. But her brother pleaded with her saying that he would also follow her as life without her was impossible for him. Tilakavati yielded to his entreaties and abandoned the idea of *sahagamana*. She led the life of a celibate and performed service to Lord Siva. Marulneekkiyar also followed her footsteps.

He grew to be of age. He felt life to be shortlived and began spending money for constructing mutts, choultries and the like showing charity to the poor. After some time he felt that he should become a monk pursuing the path of nonviolence. He went to Pataliputra and took to Jainism. In a short time he became the acknowledged leader of the Jains. He was made the prime Acharya and called Dharmasena. Tilakavati came to know about the downfall of her brother who had forsaken the path of Lord Siva and became a *Pashanda*. Her misery knew no bounds on hearing this news about him. She prayed to Lord Siva:

*"Jagannadha Mannaadha Gowreesanaadha
prapannaanukampinvipannaartihaarini
Mahahstomamoorte Samastaikabandho
Namaste namaste Punaste Namostu!"*

"O Lord of the Universe! My master and Lord of Mother Gowri! I salute you the protector of those that are in dire state needing help and that surrender unto you. You are the only wellwisher and relative of all. I again and again salute you". She prayed to the Lord to save her brother from the wrong path he had fallen into. Her agony was felt by the Lord who appeared to her in a dream and said: Shed your sorrow. Your brother had performed Tapas in his previous birth to attain me. Due to a defect in it, he has gone astray now. I shall make him suffer intense shooting pain in the stomach and convert him to be of my mind". This consoled her. At once Marulneekkiyar was attacked by shooting pains in the stomach. He tried every cure in vain. His Jain disciples administered all sorts of medicines and religious routine with muttering of charms and the like to no

purpose. The pains increased and Dhramasena was at his wit's end. He felt himself to be in the jaws of death. Then he thought of his sister and felt that she alone could cure him. He was now certain that his having forsaken the path of Lord Siva was responsible for his pitiable fate. He sent messengers to bring her to him. But she refused to set foot in the camp of unbelievers and they had to return without her. Dharmasena felt that he should forsake the Jains whose efforts could not cure him. He decided to fall at the feet of his sister and pray to her to get him cured by the grace of Allmerciful Lord Siva. His condition roused the pity of Tilakavati. She initiated him to the Holy Panchakshari mantra and asked him to worship the Lord. He went along with her to the temple of Veerasthaneswarar where she swept and cleaned the surroundings as a religious duty every day with steadfast devotion and love. He performed the pradakshinam of the temple, went in and fell flat before the deity as per the instructions of his sister who pleaded on his behalf before the Lord.

He became highly surcharged with devotion to the Lord and sang a Padiham beginning with the words; "*Kootraayinavaar vilakki ahaleer*" spontaneously in which he dedicated himself to the all time service of the Lord and prayed to be cured of the shooting pains in the stomach. Immediately on the ending of the recital, the pains vanished. He was thrilled at the mercy shown to him by the Lord whom he had forgotten all along. Then he heard the Unseen Voice of the Sky telling him: "You shall hereafter be known as Tirunavukkarasu or Vageesar, the master of speech, as you have praised me in a *Tevaram* in sweet Tamil through my grace!" Tirunavukkarasu was overcome with great devotion to the Lord and like his sister

Tilakavati he did service in the temple weeding away unwanted growth of grass and keeping the precincts clean. He always meditated upon the Lord and sang his praise. He attained great praise as a Siva Bhakta par excellence.

This news came as a thunderbolt to the Jains at Pataliputra. They thought that it would deal a death blow to them if the king were to believe in Saivism. So they went to the king and told him that Dharmasena forsook the Jain order alleging falsely that he was not cured by them and their religious procedures. They further said that he was carrying on a tirade against Jainism. The king yielding to their pressure sent for Tirunavukkarasu with a view to punishing him. The latter refused to follow the ministers of the king saying that he was the servant of Lord Sankara alone and he was not bound to any other person. He sang a Padiham beginning with the words: "*Naamaarkum Kudiyaallom*". The ministers fell on their feet and told him that they would lose their jobs and even lives if they were to go back to the king without him. The saint pitied them and followed them to save them from the wrath of their king. He put his sole trust in Lord Siva and appeared before the king. On the advice of the scheming Jains, the king ordered him to be put in a fuming dungeon where lime was being prepared and got it closed. Tirunavukkarasu prayed to Lord Nataraja saying that there could not be any danger to the devotees of Lord Sadasiva. He felt cool breeze and all heat vanished. He sang praising the Lord in a Padiham beginning with the words: "*Maasil Veenayum Maalai Madiyamum Veesu Thenrralum . . .*" meaning that he was able to enjoy such a bliss under his feet. On the eighth day the king opened the dungeon and was stunned to find him alive. The Jains ascribed his survival to his having practised Jain

mantras and advised the king to poison his milk and make him drink it. Tirunavukkarasu drank that milk unhesitatingly singing the praise of Lord Siva beginning with words: "*Podiyaarkum Tirumeni.....Adiyaarkunamju Amudam avadudaam adbhudamaa*"—when poison became ambrosia to the Lord smeared all over with ashes, is there any wonder in its having no effect on his devotee? Seeing him alive the Jains asked the king to have him trampled by the royal elephant. It was done. When the elephant however saw Tirunavukkarasu who stood firmly praying to Lord Siva, it made a circle round him, leant before him and then started going back. The mahout egged it on to trample upon him. But then it became wild, attacked the mahout and the evil Jains and killed them. The rest of the Jain monks wept before the king saying that Dharmasena was protecting himself through their mantras and would be a potential danger to them. They asked the king to get him drowned in the sea by tying him to a big rock. Even that was done. But Tirunavukkarasu was not perturbed. He surrendered himself to Lord Siva saying: "O knower of the Vedas! The Panchakshari "*Om Namassivaya*" is the only refuge to me and your power alone can help me now when I am plagued by a rock and being drowned". The Lord heard his prayer. The rock floated and he became untied. Thereupon singing the praise of the Lord, he floated on to the shores of Tiruppaadiripuliyur or Cuddalore. The devotees of the place hearing of his arrival unhurt, whole and sound, gathered together and welcomed him warmly. They went into the local Siva temple where Tirunavukkarasu or Sri Appar as he became more widely known sang: "*Eenrraalumaayi Yenakku yendayumaayi*"....meaning: "You have protected me, your humble servant, in an unforeseen way

even like my father and mother". Appar stayed there for some time and after visiting Tirumaanikkuli, Tiruttinai and so on came back to Tiruvadiham where the residents gave him the heartiest welcome. He spent his time there as usual performing his customary service of cleaning the precincts of the temple by weeding out the unwanted growth of grass.

The miraculous escape of Appar and his divine acts came to the ears of the wicked ruler who had earlier persecuted him listening to the evil advice of the Jains. The king became repentant and feeling afraid as to what would happen to him for having illtreated such a devotee of the Lord he came over to Appar and begged for his forgiveness. He thereafter punished the Jains for having misled him, destroyed their mutts and built a temple for Lord Siva at Tiruvadiham. He became an ardent Saivite. Appar desired to go to all Sivakshetras and offer songs of praise to the Lord at every place. After going to Tiruvennainallur and Tirukkovaloor, he came to Tirupennakadam. Here he felt that his body which had been polluted by Jain signs required purification. So he prayed to the Lord at Tiruttoongaana Madakoil to print his ensigns on him. Lord Siva was pleased with his sincerity and ordered the Commander of his Pramadha Ganas to do so. It was done and seeing the prints of Trisul and Vrishabha on his body Appar's ecstasy of joy knew no bounds. He sang thrillingly about the Lord's unbounded mercy towards him.

He went to Arutturai, Vriddhachalam and other pilgrimage centres dedicated to Lord Siva and finally came to Chidambaram. It appeared to him as if the Lord himself welcomed him. He sang about the glory of the

Lord and remained there for some time. He heard that the great devotee Tirugnana Sambandhar was at Sirgazhi and decided to go there and pay his respects to him. Sri Sambandhar received him with great joy exclaiming: "Appare!" Appar offered his salutations to him saying: "Here I am your humble servant!" Sri Sambandhar embraced him. It was a sight for the gods to see. It was like the union of the Lord's mercy with the Divine Mother's love. On the request of Sri Sambandhar Appar sang sweetly of the Lord who permeated the whole Universe. They stayed together happily for some time at that place. Then Appar obtained permission from Sri Sambandhar to visit the holy Sivakshetras in Chola mandala and proceeded on his journey. After worshipping at many kshetras and singing the praise of the Lord in charming hymns in Viruttams of Tondaha, Kurumdoha, Nerisai, Tirocchand and the like, he came to Tirunallur on direction from the Lord himself. Here the Lord gratified his desire by placing his divine feet on his head in a dream and showered his grace on him. Appar was beside himself with immense joy and sang in ecstasy.

At that time there was a sterling devotee of Lord Siva called Appoodi Adigal Nayanar At Tingalur. He had the highest regard for Appar. He showed this by building choultries, gardens, wells and naming them all after Appar. He called his sons as First Vageesa, Second Vageesa and so on. Hearing about this Appar decided to visit him. Appoodi Adigal received him with great respect and love and invited him for dinner in his house. Appar was very much overcome with the affection and devotion of Appoodi Adigal and agreed to be his guest. Then the first son of Appoodi died of snakebite as he was fetching a plantain leaf. The parents were shocked at it; but as

they did not want Appar to go without food, they kept the matter a secret and invited him to take food. But Appar scented that something was wrong. By his divine powers he could find out what had happened. Struck with their sincerity and devotion towards him, he directed them to bring the boy's body to the temple. There he prayed to Lord Siva, the vanquisher of Yama, in ten songs alluding to his Mrutyunjaya aspect. No sooner did he finish his prayer than the boy got up whole and alive as if from sleep. Appoodi Adigal and his family felt themselves highly blessed. But Appoodi was sad that there was interruption in serving food to Appar. The latter consoled him, went to his house, performed worship to the Lord and satisfied the family by partaking of the food placed before him. He spent some days with them and then continued his pilgrimage.

He reached Tiruvarur and participated in the Ardra festival there. He left for Puhalur where he heard about the arrival of Sri Sambandhar. He hurried to meet the latter who also was coming to him with equal eagerness. They met together and spent their time happily singing about the Lord's infinite mercy towards his devotees. Then Sri Sambandhar asked Appar to describe the glory of Tiruvarur. Sri Appar did so. On hearing his recital about the grandeur of Tiruvarur, Sri Sambandhar said that he would go to that place and on his return he would remain for sometime at Puhalur with Appar. He kept his word and Appar was glad to entertain him. The place appeared to be another Kailas with Siva Bhaktas who gathered round them. During this period Sri Chirutonda Nayanar, Sri Tiruneelanakka Nayanar, Sri Muruga Nayanar and other famous devotees of the Lord visited the place and paid their respects to them. Sri Sambandhar and

Appar thrilled them all with their inspiring songs in praise of the Lord.

After some time both Sri Sambandhar and Appar once again started on a holy visit to the various Siva Kshetras. They came to Thirukkadavur where they composed hymns in praise of Lord Siva who saved from death the sage Markandeya. They stayed here in the mutt of Sri Guggulukalayanar, a sterling devotee of the Lord. After some time they resumed their holy journey and came to Tiruveelimila kshetram where the resident devotees gave them a grand welcome. They entered the temple and offered a sweet garland of songs of praise and prayer to the Lord. While they stayed at the place, it so happened that rains failed and famine spread. People suffered heavily. They felt very much grieved for the people. One night the Lord appeared to them in a dream and said that they would each get a gold coin a day to feed the devotees with them. From the next day Sri Sambandhar got a gold coin from the eastern side of the temple while Appar got one from the western side. They bought provisions and fed all the devotees who came there intermittently. The coins got by Appar were of superior variety to those got by Sri Sambandhar. Nevertheless they were both satisfied and the sacred work went on. Grady though the money, they did not feel envy. Gradually due to the mercy of the Lord, rains fell and relief came. The famine was over. The two Nayanars were glad and they praised the Lord who had given them the means to tide over the crisis. Thereafter they continued their journey to other places of Lord Siva.

They came to Vedaranyam. Here they went round in Pradakshina in the temple and found that the opening door

was kept closed and the devotees were going in by another door. This surprised them and when they questioned the people there, they were told that the door was closed from the time the Vedas left after worshipping the Lord. No devotee had been able to get it opened. Then Sri Sambandhar said to Appar: "We shall enter only by this door. Please sing the praise of the Lord and get the door opened by your pious poetic power". Then Appar appealed to the Lord of Uma at Vedaranyam to feast their eyes with his divine vision by opening the intervening door. When he found the Lord not yielding, he sang a song of reproach for not showing any mercy to them. Then the door opened wide to the extreme amazement of all. They fell flat on the floor before the two devotees and offered their salutations to them. The two devotees along with the other worshippers entered the sanctum sanctorum by that door and worshipped the Lord. Then Appar requested Sri Sambandhar to pray to the Lord and see that it was made possible to have the door open and close forming the regular entrance for all thereafter. Sri Sambandhar sang a song. At once the door closed. It became possible to open and close it and all the devotees felt highly delighted and blissful. From that day it formed the regular entrance into the temple. The two Nayanars resolved to remain there for some time.

Appar was a little depressed for the door opened only after he had sung ten songs while it shut immediately after one song was sung by Sri Sambandhar. This disturbed his mind a little one day. That night the Lord appeared to him in a dream and directed him to go to Tiruvaayimur. He would be given guidance. Appar was pleased and the next day he followed the path shown by the person shown in his dream. He came to the temple at the place.

His guide vanished here. Meanwhile Sri Sambandhar knowing that Appar had gone to Tiruvaayimur hastened there. Here Appar felt miserable when the Lord did not appear before him. He prayed to the Lord: "You showed your mercy when I sang at the request of Sri Sambandhar by getting the door open. Now I am at fault. Is it proper for you to disappear? Sri Sambandhar who could close the door with one song about you has come now. How is it that you are not appearing even for his sake?" Then the Lord vouchsafed his darshan to Sri Sambandhar. The latter praised the Lord and showed him to Appar who thereupon offered his prayer to the Lord begging his forgiveness and praising his mercy. After a brief sojourn here they returned to Vedaranyam.

Then hearing from the messengers sent by the Queen of the Pandyan king regarding the atrocities committed by the Jains, Sri Sambandhar made up his mind to go over to the Pandyan country and root out Jainism with the aid of Panchakshari and Vibhooti of the Lord. Appar was reluctant about it and tried to dissuade him from doing so. But Sri Sambandhar was firm in his resolve and left him.

Sri Appar left Vedaranyam after some time and visiting the several Siva kshetras on the banks of the Cauvery, came to Tiruavadutturai. After that he came to Palayoor and entered the temple there. The residents of the locality said that the Linga there was stolen by the Jains and hidden somewhere and what he saw there was quite a false temple Vimana. Appar became very sorry on hearing this news and then standing at a distance from it, he prayed to the Lord and vowed that he would not go one step further from the place unless and until the real Linga was placed in the temple. He refused to take food

and water and remained there with his mind in deep concentration on the Lord. Lord Siva appeared in the dream of the Chola king of that place and told him the exact place where He was kept hidden by the Jains. He asked the king to reinstal him in the temple and save Appar thereby. The king woke up and finding the Siva Linga at the place indicated by the Lord got it reinstalled in Vadadali temple and took severe action against the Jains and destroyed their mutts. He offered his respects to Appar and had necessary provision made for regular worship in the temple. Appar praised the Lord for his inimitable grace and spent his time there doing his usual service.

Then he continued his pilgrimage to other places after some time. He visited Jambukeswaram, Tiruchirapalli and other places and travelled towards Tirupaingili. While on this journey he felt very hungry and thirsty. The Lord by mere volition created gardens and tanks to give him relief on the way and taking the shape of a brahmin he appeared before Appar and fed him. Appar felt relieved. The brahmin told him that he was going to Paingili and asked him if he was also going there. Appar followed him. When they were nearing the place, the new-comer vanished. Appar could now realise that it was the Lord himself that had guided him and looked after him. He offered songs of thankfulness to the Lord. After a stay of a few days there, he continued his journey, visited Kanchi and other places, came to Kalahasti and after worship there, went to Srisaila kshetra. Thereupon he went to Varanasi and offered worship to Lord Viswanadha.

Then fired with intense yearning to go to Mount Kailas and have darshan of the Lord, he pursued his path alone

on the Himalayan heights. He could not walk. He rolled on the ground and went forward. His body was bruised and became skeleton like. But he went on with determination. The Lord was pleased with his intensity of devotion and as Appar had still to do a lot in the world he assumed the form of a sage and accosted him. Then the sage disappeared and a voice from the sky asked him to get up. Appar did so. He became as strong and muscular as before and prayed for the vision of the Lord as in Kailas. He was directed by the voice to bathe in a tank there. He would find himself in Tiruvaiyar. There he would find the place as an exact replica of Kailas and he would be favoured with the Lord's darshan as in Kailas. Appar sang the glory of the Lord and uttering the Panchakshari plunged into the tank there as instructed. To his utter astonishment he found himself in Tiruvaiyar tank. He found that the place was transformed as it were into Kailas with every couple like Parvati and Parameswara. The Lord gave him darshan as Umamaheswara with Mother Parvati by his side and all his entourage in their usual postures and positions. All the divinities were in attendance. Appar was overcome with divine fervour and uttered soulful prayers to the Lord who was omnipresent. He felt himself highly fortunate and blessed. The illusion vanished and ultimately he found the temple as it was. He stayed at Tiruvaiyar for some days and after leaving it came to Tirupoondurutti where he caused the construction of a beautiful mutt.

Sri Sambandhar defeated the Jains, set right the hunchback defect of the Pandyan king, established Sivagnanabodham and returned to the Chola country. Learning that Appar was at Tirupoondurutti he came there. Appar was glad and to show his regard to Sri

Sambandhar, became one of the bearers of the Pearl Palanquin carrying the latter. He was found out and Sri Sambandhar embraced him. Theirs was a blissful reunion. Learning from Sri Sambandhar about his spiritual conquest of the Pandyan country, Appar desired to visit the country and did so after taking permission from him. He went to Madurai and was received with great honour and pomp by Mangayarkkarasi and Kulacchira Nayanar. He went to Rameswaram and returned to Tiruppuhalur. He lived with complete dedication to the Lord who wanted to make public Appar's complete disregard for material wealth. The lord filled the temple precincts with all precious metals and varieties of gems. But Appar swept them off to nearby pits without as much as even a slight look at them. The celestial damsels tried to corrupt his morals and failed miserably in their attempts. He was always of the mind of Lord urging his mind to think of Siva and Siva alone.

*"Siva Siveti Sivetivaa Bhava Bhaveti Bhavetivaa
Hara Hareti Haretivaa Bhaja Manassivameva
nirantaram!"*

He directed his mind to always worship Lord Siva going by the names of Bhava and Hara and only Siva and none else.

He spent all his time thus and finally attained the divine feet of the Lord. He was permeated by Siva-consciousness and was a practical illustration of the following prayer:

*"Aatmaa tvam Girijaamatihi Sahacharaha
Praanaaha sareeram gruham
Poojaate vishayopabhogaarchanaa Nidraa
Samaadhisthithi*

Samcharaha Padayohpradakshinavidhihi
Stotraanisarvaagi
Yadyatkarmakaromi tattadakhilam
Sambho! Tavaaraadhanam!"

He felt the Lord to be his soul, Mother Parvati to be his intellect, the Lord's attendants to be his vital breaths of life and the Lord's abode to be his body. All his actions in pursuance of his senses constituted his worship. His sleep was his state of Samadhi. All his movements consisted of the pradakshinam of the Lord. All that he uttered was the Lord's praise. In fact whatever he did he did as worship of Lord Sambhu. His Tevarams contain this truth and singing them is sure to lead one to the lotus feet of the Lord.

DHARMASTHAPAKA

SRI KRISHNA

(Vouchsafed to gratify the desire of his disciples by the Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal.)

*Yadaa yadaahi Dharmasya glaanirbhavati Bhaarata,
Abyutthaanamadharmasya Tadaatmaanam
Srujamyaham.*

The Lord said to Arjuna in the course of *Geetopadesa*: "Whenever there is decline of Dharma and Adharma flourishes unimpeded, I create my body for myself." He comes down into this world with the body so taken up by him to establish Dharma while wiping out the rampant Adharma. What is this Dharma about which the Lord is so much concerned and for which he is born in this world yuga after yuga? It is of two categories. One is called *Pravritti Dharma*. The other is called *Nivritti Dharma*.

Pravritti Dharma pertains to the attainment of desires of enjoyment of heavenly sojourn and pleasures attendant there by the performance of appropriate holy deeds and rites in this world following typical rules of right conduct and leading a life of virtue.

Nivritti Dharma pertains to the attainment of salvation or freedom from the cycle of births and deaths and realising

Brahman. In this case the votary of Dharma has to concentrate with *Bhakti* or devotion on the Lord leaving the fruits of every action to him. All deeds have to be performed with a sense of detachment and full dedication.

The Lord said to Arjuna:

*Yetu Sarvaani Karmaani Mayisamnyasya Matparaah
Ananyenaiva Yogena Maam dhyayanta upasate!
Tesaamaham Samuddhartha Mrutyu Samsaara
Saagaraat
Mayyeva Mana Aadhatsva Mayi Buddhim Nivesaya
Nivasishyasi Mayyeva Ata Oordhvam Na Samsayah!"*

"When one dedicates all his acts to me, thinks of me with singleminded devotion and attention, desiring only me, I shall ere long free him from this cycle of births and deaths and from the *Samsaara Saagara*. Therefore do everything with dedication of mind to me. If you were to do so, without doubt you shall live in me after you leave this mortal coil."

For both these types of Dharma there arose great danger in *Dwaapara yuga*. Tyrants like Kamsa, Kaalaya-vana, Naraka, Jaraasandha and others became storehouses of evil and there was a steep decline of *Dharmic* life. People were afraid of following the rites and rituals prescribed for them and worshipping godhead. They were not able to pursue their Swadharma with safety. Might was right and Aasuric qualities reigned supreme. Dharma was at a low ebb. The position had to be retrieved. So the Lord took the shape of Sri Krishna and fulfilled his mission of establishment of Dharma on a firm pedestal free from fear or favour, let or hindrance,

He killed the evildoers like Kamsa and the other Asuraas. He established Dharma everywhere and made the world safe and sound for the meek and the weak to lead an unfettered life of virtue. But in the *Dharmakshetra of Kurukshetra*, Adharma began to raise its ugly head due to the arrogance and hatred of Duryodhana, the Kaurava Prince, who put his cousin brothers to untold misery after having grabbed their rightful kingdom by a ruse with the help of the wicked Sakuni making them defeated by deceit in a gambling contest between Sakuni and Yudhishtira. He would not give back the rightful share of the kingdom to Yudhishtira and his brothers even after they had successfully completed the conditions of their wager in the gambling. Lord Sri Krishna came into the scene on behalf of Dharma which was on the side of the Pandavaas. They were his great devotees and had no other help.

The Lord tried every means to wean away Duryodhana from Adharma which would bring him and his brothers to harm while bringing the world to disaster. He even showed his cosmic form to Duryodhana in the process. But the bile had accumulated too much in his eyes to see the writing on the wall if Dharma were not to be followed by him. Lord Sri Krishna had therefore to let the epic war of Mahaabharata take place. But just when the moment came to stage the war, Arjuna, his instrument in the cause of Dharma, was afflicted with an illusion and laid down his weapons in the battlefield with a crushing feeling of depression with the thought that it was not proper for him to do battle killing all his relatives, friends, elders and teachers who were ranged against him. He said:

*"Nacha Sreyonupasyaami Hatwaa Swajanamaahave
Na kaamkshe Vijayam Krishna Nacha Raajyam*

Sukhaanicha.

*Kimno raajyena Govinda Kimbhogairjeevitena vaa
Yeshaamartham Kaamkshitam no raajyam bhogaah*

Sukhannicha."

"O Krishna! I am not able to perceive any good that can come out of this war killing my own people. I do not like to win in this battle. I do not desire to have this kingdom, the riches and the resultant pleasures. Of what use are they?"

For he said further, "I find before me the *Aachaaryaas*, the parents, sons, grandfathers, uncles, grandsons for whose sake alone we desire these riches and kingship. I do not like to kill them".

This was a highly critical position indeed. Arjuna who was chosen by the Lord to be his companion in that saga of establishment of Dharma was blinded by a false interpretation of Dharma which led him even to forsake his *Kshaatra Dharma*. He said that on account of the war there was going to be *Kulakshaya*, that is, the destruction of families, thereby leading to the destruction of *Kuladharmas* which in turn would be leading to the destruction of *Sanaatana Dharma*. Due to growth of Adharma in this manner, the women would become debased leading to hybrid posterity and making all go to hell.

Arjuna said in anguish:

*"Aho bata Mahatpaapam Kartum Vyavasitaavayam
Yad raajya sukha lobhena Hamtum Swajana*

mudyatah!"

"Yadi maamaprateekaaramasastram

Sastrapaanayah

Dhaartharaashtra Rane hanyustanme Kshemataram

bhavet."

"O Lord! What a sin are we about to commit! We are on to kill our kith and kin due to greed of kingship. I am averse to war. I am laying aside my weapons. Even if the sons of Dhritaraashtra were to kill me weaponless and unwilling to do battle, it will conduce to my welfare."

The Lord had to teach Arjuna the essential nature of Dharma, disabuse his mind of the false impression that he was about to commit a Himaalayan crime and make him fight the battle for and on behalf of Dharma; the Celestial song Bhagavadgeeta was vouchsafed to him and through him to the world.

He taught to him *Saamkhya yoga* and spoke to him about the *Dehaatmaviveka*. The body has death. The Atma or soul is eternal. This *jnaana* of *Atma* cannot be easily attainable. There should be purity of mind for the purpose. To get this purity of mind *Karma Yoga* should be followed. For one of impure mind performance of *Karmaas* without any desire for the enjoyment of the fruits thereof by dedicating everything to the Lord is recommended for securing the purity of mind and realising godhead. For one of pure mind, *Sannyaasa* or leaving out everything with a sense of detachment to material life is prescribed. This renunciation is conditioned by *Dhyaana* or meditation. The Lord's *Vibhooti* can be perceived in all creation. A Dharmic life has to be lived and *Saadhana* or active practice has to be gone through in the performance of *Dhyaanayoga*. This can be achieved

by the chanting of the Lord's name and by doing unadulterated *Bhakti* to him. To dispel the doubts of Arjuna with regard to which path he was to follow, the Lord showed him his *Viswaroopa* and made him battleminded. The Geeta which is the Nectaric *Saashtra* of Dharma straight from the mouth of God is to be venerated as the Supreme scripture setting Dharma on its pristine base bejewelled and chistled by the Lord Himself setting forth the Dhaarmic paths suited to the different degrees or levels of attainment by the people of the world. We should pray to the Allmerciful Lord for this bounty.

*"Prapanna Paarijaataaya Totra Vetrakapaanaye
Jnaanamudraaya Krishnaaya Geetaamruta Duhe
Namah!"*

Salutations to the One who is like Kalpavriksha to those that seek refuge in him! Salutations to him who has the whip to drive cattle in one hand and the Jnaanamudra in the other hand! Salutations to Lord Krishna the milker of Geetaamruta!

The Lord had made Paartha, the calf, the Upanishads the Cow, Himself the milker and the Geeta Nectar the milk to be drunk by all Virtuous.

*"Sarvopanishado Gaavo dogdhaa Gopaala Nandanah,
Paartho Vatsah Sudheerbhoktaa Dugdham Geetaamru-
tam Mahat.*

The Geeta contains the quintessence of Dharma in all its aspects. Through it the Lord spread the divine message that when one performs the duties enjoined on him perfectly with *Bhakti* to the Lord without any thought of enjoying the fruits thereof he becomes purified and

gets salvation. Dharma is that which contributes to the welfare of the world and which is in accordance with the injunction of the Lord.

Lord Sri Krishna showed this amply when he made Dharmaraja go to Bheeshma who was on his deathbed to learn about Dharma and get consolation for having been instrumental in bringing about the death of his kith and kin, his friends and preceptors. He had to be put right regarding his idea of Dharma. Bheeshma was the knower of all intricacies of Dharma. He had time and again said that Dharma was on the side of the Pandavaas. A doubt will naturally arise in one's mind as to why then he should have been on the side of Adharma with Duryodhana. It was not for any desire of enjoyment of riches or kingship or pleasure for he had renounced them all. He did not think of changing sides not because of being accused of treachery to Duryodhana whose vassal he legally was, It was because he did not debate about it at all. He surrendered himself to the Lord for guidance in this respect. It was an intuitive act. He remained steadfast on the side of his masters and carried out the *kshaatra dharma* as in duty bound with a sense of detachment and with complete dedication to the Lord. At the time of his death he prayed to the Lord to tell him what was beneficial to him.

Throughout the battle of Mahaabhaarata Lord Sri Krishna played the role of the protector of the followers of Dharma to perfection. He even took up the weapon of *Sudarsana Chakra* when he found Arjuna unable to cope with Bheeshma's onslaught for he was firmly determined the Dharmic Pandavaas should win and would not allow anything to happen to the contrary. Bheeshma was gifted

with the power of dying at will and no one could kill him against his will. Hence the Lord had to try to go out of the way against his word that he would not handle any weapon in the war. He did not do any Adhaarmic act in that. Bheeshma, his true devotee had vowed that he would make the Lord wield his weapon and as the fulfiller of the desire of his Bhakta, the Lord here was made to take the weapon in hand for that purpose. This was however prevented by Arjuna rising to the occasion at the act of the Lord and himself flooring Bheeshma.

Bheeshma told Dharmaraja everything about Dharma. But after the death of Bheeshma he once again lapsed to the previous state of despondency and thought of renouncing the kingdom so dearly won and going to the forest. Now the Lord took upon himself the task of putting him on the right path. He said to Dharmaraja: "You are called Ajaatasatru. If so you should not have any enemy. But you are having an enemy thwarting you. It is your ego or *Ahamkaara*. As long as you do not get rid of this *Ahankaara* how can you get any peace of mind? At least try to get rid of that enemy from now on. A person of your type cannot get over that opponent by enmity. Indulge in it without any desire of enjoyment. Your enemy is full of *Rajoguna*. That is why you are stimulated by me to do *Karma*; unless you do your duty and perform your work without any thought of desire of enjoyment, you cannot pacify that enemy. Giving up of *Karmaas* at this time is not proper for you. If you perform rites like *Aswamedha Sacrifice* and other similar *Karmaas*, with a sense of detachment, your *Rajoguna* will be mitigated. Then you will attain purity of mind and consequent quiet." This teaching of the Lord goes by the name of "*Kaama Geeta*" and it had an electric effect on

Dharmaraja. He thereupon gave up *Ahankaara*, performed the Horse sacrifice and other rites as in duty bound and followed his Dharma. Lord Sri Krishna achieved his object of establishing Dharma on a sound basis employing persuasive method of teaching.

He was full of compassion to his devotees. Arjuna wanted to listen from him the teaching of the Geeta once again as he had forgotten the details. The Lord said that it was not possible to get into that Yogic state even as Arjuna was not able to recapture that mental state of distress. However he taught him the gist of it in the *Anugeeta*. In it he taught that for peace of mind control over it is necessary. For that no external means can suffice other than *Yoga*. Before winding up his *avataara* on earth he had granted to Uddhava, his sterling devotee, the true knowledge of Dharma in all its shades. He said to Uddhava, "Do not be under the false impression that salvation is possible only to the person who knows the Vedas. Whether learned or illiterate, male or female, whoever it is, everyone who surrenders unto me wholeheartedly is eligible. I have taught the Dharma to Arjuna making *Karmayoga*, the primary basis as his mind was full of *Rajoguna* making him try to controvert me and refuse to fight by putting forward arguments and counter-arguments. I have taught you *Bhakti Yoga* as you have taken refuge in me with absolute surrender of mind." Thus Lord Sri Krishna, the *Aadiguru*, taught according to the mental state of the person using the appropriate methods at the appropriate juncture.

"*Pumavasthaadi Bhedena Karma Jnaana mayee*

lwidah

Nishttoktaayena tam Vande Saurim Samsayacchidam".

Salutations to Lord Sri Krishna who had cleared the doubts of the virtuous by teaching *Karma Jnaana Nishtta* according to their ripeness of mind to receive the teaching.

The Lord laid great store by Dharma. He refused to take the food offered by Duryodhana who had invited him for the purpose when he had gone to Hastinaapura on his peace mission on behalf of Dharma. He declared that the hospitality of people who followed Adharma should be avoided as the sin of the person would be in it. Whatever the poor man following the path of Dharma gives is wholesome as it is pure. That was why Lord Sri Krishna partook of the hospitality of Vidura who though poor among the Kurus was a true follower of Dharma. The incarnation of Lord Sri Krishna fulfilled the purpose of establishment of Dharma to the full. The Lord has said one thing which every one should note. When one is perplexed and unable to decide what is dharma and what is adharma in the situations in which he or she is placed, the Lord has preached absolute surrender to him as the recipe. He said:

"Sarva Dharmaan Parityajya Maamekam Saranam

Vraja

Ahamtwaa Sarva Paapebhyo Mokshayaami

Maasuchah"

"Reject all dharma and adharma in practice i.e. Varna Dharma, Asramadharma, Common Dharma and come into my fold. Surrender unto me only. Fix in your mind that there is no other thing existent other than me. When you get that fixity of mind, I shall reveal my form to you and free you from all the Karmaas good or sinful which are the concomitant results of performance of Dharma or Adharma."

So our path is clear. Let us do our duty with a sense of dedication and surrender to the Lord—for it is said:

*"Ekopi Krishnasya Kritah Pranaamo
Dasaaswamedhaavabrutenatulyah,
Dasaaswamedhee Punaretijanma,
Krishnapranaamee Na punarbhavaaya".*

One salutation to Lord Sri Krishna is equivalent to the performance of ten *Aswamedha* Sacrifices. But while the performer of the ten *Aswamedhaas* is born again in this world, the person who salutes the Lord Sri Krishna has no rebirth at all."

Om Tat Sat.

SRI CHANDESWARA NAYANAR

(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandri-malai Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples)

*"Pasoonampatim Paapanaasam Paresam
Gajendrasya Kruttim Vasaanam Varenyam
Jatajootamadhye Spuradgaangadhaarim
Mahaadevamekam Smaraami Smaraami!"*

My repeated prayers are for Lord Pasupati, the wiper-out of sins and the Supreme Lord. I salute oft that Lord dressed in elephant skin, the Highest of the highest of divinities, wearing the radiant Mother Ganges in the midst of his matted locks of hair. The devotees of Lord Siva have nothing to fear. Unstinted devotion to him is the sole means to salvation. One who surrenders himself to the Lord completely can never be tainted by any sin. This was amply exemplified through the sacred life of Sri Chandeswara Nayanar.

He was born to a pious brahmin called Ecchadattan living in Senganallur on the banks of the river Manniyar. Ecchadattan was a great devotee of Lord Sadasiva. His wife equalled him in her devotion to the Lord.

They brought up the boy in a holy atmosphere. He was called Vicharasarma. He became an adept in all the Sastras and in the knowledge of the Vedas. His brilliant intellect, his power of understanding and exposi-

tion of the intricate, problems of Vedanta astounded his preceptors. He found out through his studies that the lotus feet of Lord Nataraja was the only real thing in the world and that eternal dancer was the sole God of the Universe. He concentrated on him and prayed:

*"Sivaakaanta Sambho Sasaankardhamoule
Mahesaanasoolin Jataajootadhaarin
Tvameko Jagadvyaapako Viswaroopaha
Praseeda Praseeda Prahbho! Poornaroopa!"*

"O the Dearest of Parvati! Lord Sambho having the Crescent Moon on your head, the holder of Trisool and wearer of matted locks of hair!"

You alone permeate the Cosmos. You are the Cosmic shape. I pray to you, the Perfect One, to be pleased with me!"

Gradually he became filled with Siva-consciousness and everything appeared to him as the manifestation of that Lord.

One day he saw a cowherd beating a cow mercilessly for having defied him. He became very angry and scolded the cowherd for his cruel action, saying: "Does it not belong to the sacred family of Nandhi? Is not the sacred Vibhuti given by it? Is this the way to treat it? Stop. I shall hereafter look after this herd. Tell the owners." The fellow fell on his feet before him and begged for excuse. He went away leaving the cows in the loving care of the young Vicharasarma. The boy looked after the cows thereafter with the consent of the owners. He looked after them with great tenderness and love while concentrating his mind on Lord Siva all

through. The cows gave the milk in plenty to the owners due to his proper husbanding of them.

One day it occurred to him that it would be better for him to make a *Saikata* Linga, that is, the Linga form of the Lord in sand, and perform abhisheka or bath in milk to him taking some milk from each of the cows. Accordingly he made a *Saikata* Linga, drew a plan of the sanctum sanctorum over it with the temple and its precincts for it and full of devotion to Lord Siva poured milk over the form of the Lord praying to him:

*"Sarvatra maam rakshatu Viswamoortihī
Jyotirmayaananda Ghanaschidaatmaa
Anoraneeyaanurusakti rekassa Easwaraha
Paatu bhayaadaseshaat!"*

His prayers were for the protective breastplate of the Lord's power to give him shelter from all fear and fill him with the highest form of bliss. The Lord present alike in the atom and in the huge was sure to save him, being the only Saviour.

The cows gave him ample milk for the sacred milk-bath of Lord Iswara whom he visualised in the Linga. Also they gave more than the required quantity of milk to their owners. So the villagers had no cause to suspect anything. They were pleased with the loving care of Vicharasarma towards their cows. It went on like this for some time. One day a stranger came that way and found what the boy was doing. He thought that the boy was doing wanton mischief and reported to the villagers about the waste of milk by the boy. This angered the villagers who complained to Ecchadattan.

The latter decided to find out the truth about the complaint. So he followed the boy unknown to him. Vicharasarma as usual set about his duty of worshipping the Lord by milk bath. Due to the will of the Lord who wanted to make public the intense devotion of Vicharasarma, Ecchadattan lost his sense of proportion, became wild with the boy and going to where the latter was lost in meditation of the Lord beat him mercilessly. The boy was not disturbed as he was lost to the outside world in his deep state of contemplation of the Universal Father. The insensate Ecchadattan did not know this. Mad with rage he kicked the milkpot spilling the milk. Vicharasarma opened his eyes being violently shaken from his Samadhi state. He was determined to punish the person who had committed such a heinous crime against his Lord. He saw that the culprit was his own father. He felt that whoever it was albeit his father he should be punished for *Sivaaparadha*. He took up a stick imagined it to be an axe and used it against his own father. By his volition, the stick become a real axe and cut off both the legs of Ecchadattan who died on the spot. Vicharasarma did not feel any compunction about it. He resumed his meditation of the Lord.

The Supreme Lord was highly pleased with the intense devotion of the boy who even cut off his father's legs as a punishment for defiling the Lord's worship.

So he appeared before the boy in all splendour whereupon the latter supplicated to him:

"Bhaktapraarthita Sarvaartha Kaamadheno!

Puraantaka!

Karunaavarunaavaasa! Traahi Maamaparaadhinam!"

"O Lord! the Destroyer of the Three Puras, the wishful-filing Celestial Cow-Kamadhenu of all devotees, the Ocean of mercy! Please save me, a sinner in your regard!"

The Lord said that he had committed no sin. He had done his duty. He had killed his father for his crime against the Lord. "I am now your father," continued the Universal Father. He embraced the boy who became thrilled by the touch. The Lord said, "You shall be Chandeswara. You shall be the leader of the Bhakta Ganas. You shall wear all the attire and decorations which I am wont to wear. You are entitled to be blessed." Vicharasarma who became Chandeswara was applauded by all the divinities who appeared on the scene and the Pramadha ganas who formed the entourage of Lord Siva. He went to Kailas with the Lord. Ecchadattan, his father, attained the lotus feet of the Lord though he had committed a grievous crime against him. For the Lord was All merciful. Thus Chandeswara Nayanar won the position of becoming the adopted son of Lord Siva and he is held in great esteem and devotion by all Sivabhaktas.

KAMA GITA

*(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandri-
malai Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples)*

Dharmaraja fell into a highly despondent mood after the Kurukshetra War. He was reluctant to remain in the kingdom which was won by killing his kith and kin, his preceptors and elders. He felt no desire for royal life or worldly paraphernalia. He thought that desire was the root of his ruin. Desire of kingdom led to the death of his near and dear. He was in the same mood as his brother Arjuna was in the battlefield at the beginning of the Mahabharata War. Seeing the Kaurava army in the field Arjuna said:

*"Nacha sreyonupasyaami hatvaa swajanamaahave
Na kaamkshe Vijayam Krishna na cha raajyam
sukhaanicha!*

*Kim no raajyena Govinda kim bhogairjeevitena vaa.
Yeshaamarthe kaamkshitam no raajyam bhogaah
sukhaanicha!*

*Ta imevasthitaa yuddhe Praanaamstyaktvaa
dhanaanicha,
Aachaaryaah pitarah putraastathaivacha pitaa mahaah
Maatulaah svasuraah poutraah syaalaah sambandhi-
nastathaa!*

"I do not find any good accruing to me by killing our own people in the battle. I do not want Victory or

kingship or pleasures, for those people with whom we ought to enjoy them are all here—preceptors, elders, uncles, sons, grandfathers and so on—ready to fight.

Similarly Dharmaraja felt no happiness at the victory wrought by the bravery of his brothers under the protective aegis of Lord Sri Krishna. He felt averse to ruling over the kingdom after losing all his beloved kith and kin. He wanted to have no desire, go and perform Tapas far away from the world. Now Lord Sri Krishna, the upholder of Dharma, stepped in to make him inclined and equal to the task of governing the country which, bereft of a virtuous ruler, would go to dogs.

The Lord told Dharmaraja that his sorrow was not dharmic. His mind was working in the wrong direction. His foes fell by their own past karma and on his part he should not weep for them. He further said that the two-lettered word "*Mama*" was the harbinger of death while the three-lettered word "*namama*" is the forerunner of *Brahmajnana*. The thought of "I" and concomitant feelings should be eschewed and the thought "Not I" ruled *Brahmavidya*, so that it should be entertained and fostered. The lives of individuals were eternal battles going on between "I" and "Not I"—Death and Brahman. Real victory was not the victory over the external enemies. Dharmaraja should conquer his inner enemies, namely, the Arishadvargas—*Kama* (Desire), *Krodha* (Anger), *Lobha* (Greed), *Moha* (Attachment), *Mada* (Pride and Insolence) and *Matsarya* (Envy). He should sublimate these qualities of the mind and perform deeds with faith in himself and God overhead, unattached to the fruits thereof. He could not kill desire by itself.

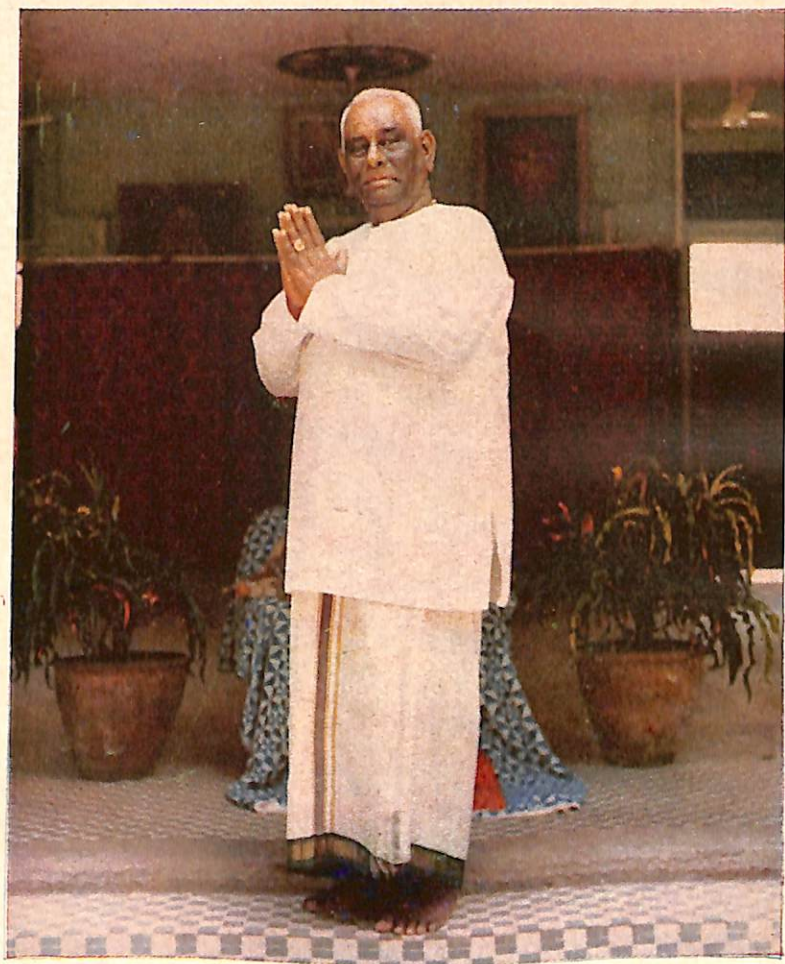
The Lord continued: "Of the inner enemies *Kama* is formidable. He is all pervading and there can be no work without *Kama* or desire. Even *adhyayana* of Vedas, sacrifice, *dana* or giving gifts and *tapas* have *Kama* for their base. In this connection there is a pronouncement called "*Kama Geeta*" made by *Kama* himself. *Kama* said: "No one kills me. In one way or other I rule the minds of all. I am immortal. One is sadly mistaken if he thinks that he can annihilate me by *Tapas*. I enter his mind in the shape of his aim in performing that penance and the result he aspires to attain. If one knows this, he will not feel that he can get rid of me. If one thinks that he can kill me by aiming at Salvation, I am there in him as the desire to attain *Moksha*. I have no end. It is not possible to wipe me out." It is true. You are desiring for something or other in some way or other. You cannot say that desire always leads to unhappiness and should therefore get rid of it. It is not proper for you to say that you do not desire to rule now, you want to go to do penance far away from the world and you do not have any desire to be in the kingdom. You will be doing your duty by taking over the control of the kingdom won by you in the war of *Dharma* and establishing *Dharma*. What you have to do is to sublimate your desire and rule without any thought of and any desire of enjoying the fruits thereof, perform rites without any desire of participating in the benefits that may flow from them; do *Aswamedha* sacrifice and such like in the same way. If you do so, *Kama* will automatically become your helper and guide to dharmic conduct leading to attainment of selfrealisation.

This peroration of the Lord had its desired effect upon Dharmaraja. The Lord's enunciation of the *Kama Geeta*

to make him desire to rule to establish Dharma for Dharma's sake was received well by him and as Arjuna did on the battle field, so did Dharmaraja surrender his will with love to the will of Lord Sri Krishna. He entered on his kingly duties with his mind centred on the Lord and without any personal desire. Hence unstinted love and dedication to the Lord is the surest way to get salvation. One should always meditate on him.

*Smartavyah satatam Vishnurvismartavyo na jatuchit
Sarve vidhinishedaah syuretayo reva Kimkarah!*

Constant and endless meditation of the Lord controls all inhibitions and prohibitions, all desires and needs. The Lord takes upon himself the duty of saving his followers making their "Kama" perfect and flawless.



SRI SUNDARAMOORTI NAYANAR

(Vouchsafed to My Adiyaan Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples)

"Trayeevedyam Hrudyam Tripuraharamaadyam

Trinayanam

Jataabhaarodaaram Chaladuragahaaram Mruga-

dharam

Mahaadevam Devam Mayisadayabhaavam Pasupatim

Chidaalambam Saambam Sivamatividambam hrudi

Bhaje!"

I offer worship in my heart to Lord Siva who is known through the three Vedas and who fills the heart with bliss. He is the destroyer of the three cities and the Beginning of everything. Three eyed and with matted locks of hair he looks majestic with the moving snakes forming his garland with the antelope borne by him. He is the great Lord who is All-merciful towards me showering his grace in full on me with immense kindness. He is the Lord of the Chit ever in the company of the Divine Mother enacting the drama of the world perpetrating its ways.

The infinite mercy of the Lord towards his devotees is exemplified very beautifully in the life of Sri Sundaramoorti Nayanar who was called Tambiran Tozhar or friend by him. Sri Sundaramoorti Nayanar was formerly the devoted attendant Sri Haalaahala Sundarar in Kailas.

He was the animated reflection of the Lord. One day Lord Siva decorated himself beautifully and looked at himself in the mirror. His reflection charmed him so much that he directed it to come out taking life. The resultant person was Sri Haalaahala Sundarar who became the most beloved of all the attendants of the Lord.

One day he saw the two boon companions of the Divine Mother, Anindita and Kamalini, in the flower garden and fell in love with them. They were also similarly affected. The Lord found it out and ordained that he should take birth in the world along with them and return to Kailas after enjoying all pleasures. Sri Sundarar could not bear the separation. But he had to bow to the inevitable. He prayed to the Lord: "Though in the world, kindly grant me the strength to remember you always and never to forget your lotus feet. Let me have your protection and save me from the tentacles of Samsara".

The Lord promised to do so.

Sri Sundarar was born as the son of a sterling devotee of the Lord, called Sri Sadayanar, living at Tiruvarur. His mother Isai Gnaniar was the ideal wife vying with her husband in the worship of the Lord. The child was named Nambiyarurar and everyone loved him. One day the ruler of the country Sri Narasingamunaiyarayan saw the boy playing in the street and felt drawn to him. He wanted to rear up the boy in his palace as he could not bear the separation from him. The parents agreed to the proposal of the king. Though Sri Sundarar was brought up in the palace, he followed the religious rites enjoined upon a saivite brahmin and had his mind concentrated upon the Lord. He became well versed in Vedic lore and kingly knowledge.

When he came of age his father thought of getting him married to the daughter of the Sivacharya, Sri Sadan-gavi, living in Tiruputtur near Tirunavalur. All preparations were made for the marriage and the village put on a festive appearance earning for itself the name "*Manam Vanda Puttur*"—the Puttur of marriage. Just at the time of marriage ritual, Lord Siva came disguised as an old brahmin and said that he had a dispute with the bridegroom and unless that was settled the marriage should not take place. Sri Sundarar was surprised as he did not know the fellow at all. He asked the old man to state the point of dispute. The old man said that Sri Sundarar was given as his bonds slave by his grandfather and he had a document to that willed by him. Sri Sundarar ridiculed him and addressing him as "*Pitthaa!*" or mad man said that the claim was absurd and unnatural. No one ever heard of a brahmin being given as the slave of another. The old man showed his document and emphasised his claim. Sri Sundarar snatched the paper and tore it into pieces. The old man cried out for justice and the elders came forward to settle the matter. The old man asked them to follow him to his village of Tiruvennainallur and he would produce the original document and substantiate his case as what was torn by the bridegroom was only a copy. All went to that village and here in the presence of all he produced the document wherein it was clearly stated: "I hereby declare that I, the Adisaiva named Aaroorar, residing at Tirunavalur village, solemnly pledge that I and my descendants shall serve as bonds slaves to the mad man of Tiruvennainallur. This is written out of my free will and without any reservation". Then followed the signature of the grandfather of Sri Sundarar with the signatures of witnesses. The hand writing was identified. Sri Sundarar had no other go than

to agree to be the slave of the old man. The residents of the place asked the old man as to where he lived as they had never seen him in the village before. The Lord thereupon led them into the temple of Tiruarulturai and disappeared. All searched for him in vain. Sri Sundarar cried out aloud for him. Then the Lord gave him darsan and reminded him of his mission saying that he had enacted the drama of claiming him as his servant only to save him from the evils of samsara and put him firmly on the path of *Sivajnana*.

Sri Sundarar was overpowered with the kindness and mercy of the Lord towards him. The Lord asked him to sing his praise in sweet Tamil songs. Sri Sundarar supplicated saying that he was ignorant and unequal to the task and wanted to know how he could sing his praise. The Lord told him: "You have called me a madman—*"Pittan"*. Begin your songs with that word. I gift you with the power of the muse". As a result of the grace of the Lord, Sri Sundarar became poetic and poured forth divine songs beginning with the lines: *"Pittaa! Piraissoodi Perumaane Arulaala...."*—O Madman! the wearer of the Moon's phase, Paramesa, the Ocean of Mercy, I cannot forget you. Why is it that my mind does not waver and go away from you? O Sadasiva! manifest in the temple of Arulturai in the village of Nallur on the banks of the South Pennar! How can I say that I am not your servant?" The Lord was pleased with his song and asked him to continue in that strain, saying that his grace was fully on him. This ended the marriage of Sri Sundarar at the time and the intended bride, regarding him alone as her husband, pined away and attained the lotus feet of the Lord. Sri Sundarar decided to go on a pilgrimage to all the Saiva kshetras and sing the praise of

the Lord present in Archa form thereat. He was followed by a large number of disciples. At the temple of Lord Siva in Tirutturayur he prayed to the Lord in a Padiham-ten verses-to grant him the way of Tapas. The Lord granted his request.

Thereafter he went to Tiruverasthaaneswaram. He did not enter the place. He stayed at a mutt nearby in Siddhavata. He meditated on Sri Veerasthasneswara and lay down to sleep. The Lord took the shape of an old brahmin and entered the mutt. He placed his feet on the head of Sri Sundarar and prepared to sleep. Sri Sundarar woke up and protested against it. It happened once again and when Sri Sundarar shouted against him angrily at the outrage, the Lord said: "You have not so far recognised me" and disappeared. Sri Sundarar felt abashed and grieved at his fault in not having identified the Lord who came to purify him by placing his divine feet on his head. He sang several songs in praise of Sri Veerasthaaneswarar after a holy bath in the river Gadilam. After that he visited Tirumaanikkuli and Tiruttina and then left for Chidambaram.

Hearing about his arrival the Saivite devotees of the place gave him the warmest welcome. He had the divine vision of the Tandava Nritya of the Lord in Chitsabha or Chitram-balam. Outright he composed songs with the import that he felt highly blessed in having been born as a mortal as it enabled him to have the blissful vision of the Master of Tandava and pay obeisance to him. Then he heard the words from the Sky: "See me at Aaroor". He started for that place. He came to Sirghali and did not enter the place as he did not want to tread in that holy place of birth of Sri Gnanasambandhar and sully it. He prayed to the

Lord who at once gave him darsan as in Kailas along with the Divine Mother on the Mount of Nandi. He sang a song of forty lines with divine fervour praising the mercy of Gireesa. He then went to many other Siva Kshetras singing songs in praise of the deity there and finally came to Tiruvarur.

The devotees of the place were already alerted by Lord Thyageeswarar and they accorded him the heartiest welcome. He was pleased with their right royal welcome and singing a Padiham, meaning: "My father is here. Please question him whether he would accept me as his servant", entered the temple. He entered the sanctum sanctorum of Sri Valmeekanaadha and fell prostrate before the Lord. He sang a thrilling song praising the Lord's glory. Then the Voice was heard from the Sky: "From this day I am your friend. You shall hereafter appear in the form of a bridegroom in which you were when I made you my bondslave at Tirunavalur". The title "Tambiran Tozhar" thus conferred upon Sri Sundarar by the Lord himself shows how great a devotee of the Lord he was and how the Lord loved him. This threw him into ecstasy and he expressed his feelings of gratitude, devotion and love to the Lord in sweet poems. He continued to serve the Lord of Tiruvarur with the greatest zeal.

As fate would have it, one day he saw a very beautiful maiden in the temple and was won by her charming form. She was Kamalini, the boon companion of the Divine Mother in Kailas, born to work out her destiny in the world as per the order of Lord Siva. She was born as a danseuse and was called: "Paravaiyar". Sri Sundarar fell in love with her at first sight and sought the aid of the Lord himself to make her his own. The Lord ever at his beck and call

agreed to do so and brought about the marriage between him and Paravaiyar. Sri Sundarar was overcome with feelings of thankfulness to the Lord who had once stopped his marriage and now stepped in to gift him with the lady after his heart. He sang soulfully about the liberality and generosity of that greatest giver of boons, Lord Umamaheswara. The Lord also supplied him with grain and gold whenever he wanted. One day Sri Sundarar saw a group of devotees of the Lord and wished very much to serve them and sing about them. So he approached the Lord requesting him to give him the power and capacity to sing about those devotees, making him know about their history. The Lord was pleased with his request and said: "My devotees are peerless gems. They always live by me and love me. Their minds always dwell on me and they do not go after mundane things. Go after them and sing their praise". Sri Sundarar pleaded his inability to do so on account of his ignorance about their life history. Then the Lord said to him: "Begin your song with the lines: 'I am the servant of servants of the devotee residents of Chidambaram' and you will know what all you want to know about them and sing sweetly of them". Sri Sundarar was overcome with feelings of gratefulness to the Lord who thus showered his grace in full on him. He went to every devotee, served him and praised him in sweet garlands of verses, inspired by the Lord. This group of verses was called "Tiruttondattaha". He made mention of the sixty three Nayanmars and described their virtues.

At one time the devotee at Kundayur who was supplying him with grain found it impossible to do so due to failure of rains and consequent lack of crop. He felt miserable and slept without taking any food. The Lord appeared to him in a dream and said that he would give

the grain necessary for Sri Sundarar. In the morning when he woke up the devotee found his whole house full of mountainous heaps of corn which spread here there and everywhere. He ran to Sri Sundarar to inform him about this miracle. Sri Sundarar knew about it already through the Lord and accompanied him to Kundayur saying that the Lord had showered his grace on him. Seeing the huge quantity of grain there, Sri Sundarar thought that only the Lord could transport it to Paravaiyar's house. He therefore went to the temple of the Lord at Kosali nearby and prayed to the All merciful deity: "*Vaalina Kan maravaal vaadi varun daame. . .*"—"O Lord! Let not the lotus-eyed Paravaiyur decay on account of sorrow! I pray to you!" Then in response the Voice from the Sky was heard saying: "O Sundara! Don't feel depressed. I shall see that the grain reaches Paravaiyar's house through my Bhootaganas." Sri Sundarar was very happy and told Paravaiyar about it. Next morning to the extreme amazement of all Paravaiyar's house as well as all the village residences became filled with grain. Sri Sundarar praised the Lord's bounty.

A devotee called Kotpuliyaar invited Sri Sundarar to Tirunaatyattaankudi. Sri Sundarar agreed and started on a pilgrimage. When he came to the place Kotpuliyaar received him in a fitting manner and offered his two daughters in marriage to him. Sri Sundarar regarded them as his daughters and went into the local temple. There he praised the Lord in verses saying: "*Poon, Aan, Aavadu or Aravam. . .*" He declared: "All your ornaments are snakes" and said that he had taken the daughters of Kotpuliyaar as his own. Therefrom he went to Tiruvarur and lived happily with Paravaiyar.

Again there was the festival of Phalguni in Tiruvarur and Paravaiyar wanted to feed all the devotees who would be coming there for the festival. Sri Sundarar came over to Tiruppuhalur to collect money for the purpose. He went into the temple there and prayed to the Lord saying: "I would feel grieved if I were not to receive money even after praying to you". That night he slept there keeping some bricks under his head to serve as a pillow. In the morning when he woke up he found those bricks as well as other bricks in the temple precincts turned into gold. He was overwhelmed with gratitude and love towards the Lord and sang his praise. He got the bricks carried to Tiruvarur and visited the temple at Tiruppanayur on the way. Here he described the Lord in a *Padiham* as the most beautiful master of dance.

After some time Sri Sundarar once again undertook pilgrimage of all kshetras singing about the Lord's praise at those places. When he was at Tiruaalampulai the Lord appeared to him in a dream and asked him: "Don't you intend verily to come over to Padi?" Immediately Sri Sundarar got up and came to Padi where he sang the praise of the Lord in verses beginning with: "*Ponnaar Meniane Pulittholai* . . ."—"O Lord of golden body wearing the skin of the tiger. . ." He was blessed by the Lord. From there he went to Jambukeswaram and prayed to the Lord in melodious songs. Then at Tiruppachilaasramam he wanted gold and offered prayers to the Lord for the purpose. There was no response from the Lord. Thereupon Sri Sundarar poured out his distress in a song beginning with the words: "*Ivar Allaru Ilayopirannaar*". . He said: "Is there no deity other than you? Am I not your servant? Why did you give me this head and this tongue? Have I spoken ill of you?" He used the third

person while addressing the Lord. The Lord was very pleased with his outpouring and instantly gave him a heap of gold. After residing at the place for some time Sri Sundarar set out once again on his pilgrimage. He visited places like Tiruppaingili, Paandikodimudi and so on and had darsan of the Lord in various forms at those places. When he failed to visit Kudaliyatrur, the Lord appeared as an old brahmin and led him there. After that he came to Vriddhachala. He sang bewitchingly about the Lord in a verse beginning with the words: *Meyyai Mutrappodi*" addressing the Lord as one deeply fond of and covered with vibhooti all over the body. Sri Vriddhachaleswarar was immensely pleased with his song and gave him twelve thousand gold coins. Sri Sundarar requested the Lord to see that the heap of gold reached the house of his at Tiruvarur in a way that would spectacularly affect the people there. Then the Lord said to him: "You drop these coins in the river nearby and you will find it in the Kamalalaya lake of Tiruvarur in a heap". On hearing these words of the Lord from the Sky, Sri Sundarar took one coin as a sample for identification and put the rest in the river Manimuktar. From that he went to Chidambaram and other kshetras. Finally he came to Tiruvarur to Paravaiyar. After some time he took Paravaiyar along with him to Kamalalaya to take back the gold given by the Lord of Vriddhachala as directed by him. His search proved futile as the Lord desired to hear him sing further. Paravaiyar ridiculed him. Then Sri Sundarar invoked Sri Vriddhachaleswarar and sang a Padiham beginning with the words: *"Pon Sayida Menianeer"* and said: "You have asked me to take back the gold from here. Don't insult me before Paravaiyar". Still no response. Then he began to sing powerfully: *"Yettaadu*

Irundu Ariyen—"I never be without praising you". He found the gold. But on comparing it with the coin kept by him for identification he found that the gold was of inferior variety. Then again he prayed: "What is wrong with me? Am I not your humble servant? Why did you do this?". The Lord made it purer and of the variety desired. All were stunned at what they saw and they praised the greatness oddly exhibited by the Lord to whom Sri Sundarar's songs were nectar so that he created situations time and again to hear him sing.

Later on once again Sri Sundarar undertook a pilgrimage. As usual he sang of the Lord at every place. Whenever he was in need for food or drink the Lord took care of him and ministered to his needs appearing as an old brahmin. The Lord even begged food for him at Tirukkacchoor and relieved his hunger. Sri Sundarar went to Kanchi and described the glory of Sri Ekamreswarar in his inimitable way and prayed for gold which he needed. The Lord granted his desire as usual. He visited Sri Kalahasti and after staying there for some time, he came to Tiruvotriyur. Here he found the matchless beauty Sanghiliar who was the lady-in-waiting Anindita of the Divine Mother born in the world like him to work out his destiny. He fell in love with her. Learning who she was Sri Sundarar prayed to Lord Thyageesa to see that she was married to him as he could not live without her. The Lord once again came to his rescue. He promised to make Sanghiliar his wife and appeared to her in a dream. The damsel promised to marry Sri Sundarar provided he vowed never to leave her and return to Tiruvarur. Sri Sundarar had to take the oath to that effect before the Lord and marry her. He lived happily with her for sometime. But when spring came he thought of the festival at Tiruvarur

for Sri Valmikanadha and felt very depressed and despondent that he was deprived of the opportunity of attending the function. He sang expressing his feelings: "*Yet-tanai naal pirindirken Yennaarur Iraivanaye . . .*"—"how long can I be separated from you, my Lord of Tiruvarur, Sri Valmikanadha!".

He could not bear the pangs of separation from that Lord and so went out of the village to go to Tiruvarur. That very moment he became blind in both eyes for having transgressed the word of oath to Sanghiliar. He wept at what had happened and prayed to the Lord for forgiveness. He continued his journey towards Tiruvarur aided by the devotees. At every temple on his way he prayed for the restoration of his eyesight. At the temple at Tiruvenbakam the Lord gave him a staff to guide him. He went to Kanchi where the Lord granted him sight in the left eye having been pleased with his soulstirring songs. At last he came to Tiruvarur and surrendered to the Lord praying for the grant of sight in the right eye also. The ever merciful Lord could not bear his sorrow and restored his eye sight as prayed for. Sri Sundarar was in ecstasy of joy and praised the Lord's boundless love towards him.

Back at Tiruvarur he wanted to go to his wife Paravaiyar who refused to have anything to do with him and asked him to go to Sanghiliar. This made him miserable. He prayed to the Lord to effect a reconciliation. The Lord, who could not say no to him in anything, went as an emissary to Paravaiyar. He persuaded her to live with Sri Sundarar again which she did out of deference to him. The grip of Sri Sundarar's songs on the Lord was so powerful. The news that Sri Sundarar made use of the Lord as a go-between came to the ears of that great devotee of the

Lord, Yeyarkon Kalikama Nayanar. He vowed never to see the face of Sri Sundarar who had used the Lord as a menial. The latter came to know about his vow and appealed to the Lord to make him his well-wisher. The Lord was ready to go to his succour. He made Kalikama Nayanar suffer from a severe type of stomach ache. When Kalikama prayed to the Lord for a cure he was told that only Sri Sundarar could cure him and none else. Kalikama did not like to be cured by Sri Sundarar whom he regarded to be a sinner against the Lord. So hearing about the arrival of Sri Sundarar to cure him on the orders of the Lord he killed himself. Then Sri Sundarar unable to bear the thought that he became the cause of the Nayanar's death made up his mind to kill himself. But the All merciful Lord gave life to Kalikama Nayanar and made them friends again. They embraced each other and going to the temple at Tiruppungur prayed to the Lord for his infinite mercy towards them.

Sri Sundarar completely stole the heart of the Lord by his delicious fare of breathtaking songs. Sri Cheraman Perumal the king of Malayala Country was a sterling devotee of the Lord and he was directed by him to go to Tiruvarur and see Sri Sundarar. Sri Cheraman was received with open arms by Sri Sundarar and they travelled together to many Siva Kshetras. They went to Rameswaram and Tiruchuli. In the latter place the Lord appeared in a strange attire in his dream and said to Sri Sundarar: "I am at Kaanapperur". Praising the Lord's kindness he proceeded further along with Cheraman. They journeyed on the southern side of the Cauvery and reached Tirukandiyur. After worshipping the Lord there, they wanted to go to Tiruvaiyar on the opposite bank of the river which was in spate and could not be crossed.

Seeing that Sri Sundarar sang a Padiham beginning with the words: "*Paravum Parasum*" and offered prayers to the Lord. The swollen river gave a path to the two devotees to the astonishment and awe of all. They went to the other side and worshipped Sri Panchanadeeswarar. After that Sri Sundarar went along with Cheraman Perumal to Kerala and stayed there for some time. After spending some days there he ached to go back to Tiruvarur. He consoled Cheraman and proceeded to that place.

The king gave him untold wealth to carry with him. To test Sri Sundarar the Lord caused robbers to loot it when he was near Tirumuruganpoondi. Sri Sundarar went into the temple of the town and invoking the Lord in a beautiful song questioned him as to what he was doing when his wealth was being looted and what use there was in trusting him. The Lord heard his appeal and all wealth was restored.

Sri Sundarar spent his time happily singing about the Lord and after some time he desired once again to go to Sri Cheraman. On his way he came to Tiruppukeliyur (Avinasi). There he found hilarity and joyful *Mangala Dhwani* in one house while in the next house there were cries and groans of unhappiness. He asked the people about it. They said: "Two boys from these houses had gone to bathe in a tank here. One of the boys was dragged in by a crocodile and was lost. The thread-marriage of the second boy is taking place today and the parents of the lost boy are inconsolable thinking about him". Sri Sundarar was filled with pity for the sorrowing parents. He went to their house. They were extremely glad to receive him and forgot their sorrow. Sri Sundarar was pleased with their treatment and asked them to take

him to the tank in which their boy was drowned. When led there by him he called upon the Lord of Avinasi to bring the lost boy alive. The Lord ever by his side heard his prayer and complied with his request. The parents were happy and felt as if they were in Elysium. This miracle made every one regard him as Lord Siva incarnate. Sri Sundarar performed the Upanayanam of the boy himself and left for Kerala to Sri Cheraman.

The latter was happy beyond bounds to have been blessed once again with the soulstirring and blissful company of his bosom friend and received him with all kingly honours. Cheraman worshipped Sri Sundarar whom he regarded as the Lord personified. As Sri Sundarar spent his days there one day he had the divine message conveyed to him by the Lord to come back to Kailas. So, he came to the temple at Tiruvanjaikalam and sang the song: "*Talakkutalai maale...*" in quite charming style in a Padiham and said: "Let this servant be taken to your feet breaking the ties of Samsara". The Lord granted his desire and he was taken on a divine elephant to Kailas. Thinking of Sri Cheraman, Sri Sundarar got on to it. Cheraman seeing this, uttered the Siva Panchakshari in the ears of his horse which sped following Sri Sundarar and even overtook him. The latter saw it and sang: "*Taan Yanai munpadittaan*"—"He has gone ahead of me". Sri Sundarar reached the southern gate of Kailas and was immediately admitted into the Lord's presence. The Lord welcomed him into his fold with great love and joy. Then Sri Sundarar spoke of Cheraman who was waiting to be admitted. He was also brought in. Cheraman supplicated to the Lord and humbly made mention of his compositions, Jnana Ula and Kailas Ula and sang them. The Lord was pleased with him and made him a

leader of the Ganas. Both these songs were made public in the world by the grace of the Lord.

The life history of Sri Sundarar should be an eye opener to all. The Lord loves all his devotees and would protect them at all costs. Let the present day world note that all their troubles are due to lack of faith in God.

Though the Lord's greatness and infinite mercy are being publicised by his minstrels and saints they are not caring to perform sincere worship to him. Let us pray to him for his grace.

*"Mahaadevamantarbhajeham bhajeham
Sadaa Paarvatesam bhajeham bhajeham
Sadaanandaroopam bhajeham bhajeham
Chidaanandaroopam bhajeham bhajeham!"*

Sri Sundarar's songs charmed the Lord and they are the sure media to attain him. Let us sing Sri Sundarar's sweet songs always.

AKRURA THE HOLY

(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandri-malai Swamighal to satisfy the desire of his disciples).

The Lord Sri Krishna is known as Akruravarada. Akrura was very pious and he always thought of the Lord in his mind. He was in the service of Kamsa, the villainous king of Mathura. Kamsa wanted to kill Lord Krishna and Balarama when he knew from the Sage Narada that they were really the issues of Devaki and Krishna was destined to be his killer. So he issued a false invitation to his nephews to come over and participate in the festivities connected with the Dhanuryaga which he was going to celebrate. He ordered Akrura to go on that mission and bring the two brothers from Brindavan. These words fell like poison in the ears of Akrura. There was no other go than to obey Kamsa for certain death would be his lot if he were to disobey the royal command. But should he bring his Lord into trouble by using guile and putting him in Death's den? What a fool he was! Couldn't the Lord annihilate the evil Kamsa? Did he not know the heart of his humble self? Why should he fear? Now had come the splendid opportunity for him to go personally and pay tributes openly and without fear to his Lord to his heart's content. He felt highly blessed that he was chosen for the purpose. He bowed to his king and set out on his journey to Brindavan in elation. He assured himself that the Allmerciful Lord would shed his grace on him and forgive him for having come on a dastardly mission.

His heart jumped in joy as he saw the Lord and Balarama in the fields. He rolled down on the ground which was made sacred by the sanctifying feet of his Lord. He forgot himself in great ecstasy at the divine sight. Then he came to normal plane and bashfully approached the Lord and his brother and made his obeisance. The kind Lord received him with broad smiles and took him tenderly to Nanda Gopa. When asked about the reason for his unexpected arrival there by Nanda, Akrura haltingly and nervously spoke of Kamsa's invitation to the Dhanuryaga specially brought up to lure the Lord and his brother to certain death at the hands of Chanura and Mushtika, the frightful wrestlers. Lord Krishna laughed outright at the news and so did Balarama. They made announcement to the Gopas to get ready to go along with them with tributes to their beloved uncle at Mathura who was so kind and considerate towards them. Akrura felt himself mightily relieved when he found the Lord's reaction. He was in Elysium as it were.

The next day Akrura along with the divine brother set out for Mathura. They reached the Kalindi river at noon. The brothers got down, quenched their thirst and sat down in the chariot. Akrura took their permission to go into the river to bathe and perform his ablutions. He walked into the water and as he looked up to chant his prayers he saw the two brothers shining in all their effulgence before him in the water. It was unbelievable. He wanted to make sure that the brothers were in the chariot. As he reached the shore he found them as usual talking unmindful of anything. Thus assured, he came back his mind full of the Lord. As he got into the quiet and refreshing water, he found before him the blissful vision of Lord Mahavishnu reclining on his bed Ananta Adishesha. He went into

raptures and praised the Lord who appeared before him in all brilliance out of mercy towards him. He prayed:

*"Namah Kaarana Matsyaaya Pralayaabdhhi charaayacha
Hayaseershney Namastubhyam Madhukaitabha*

Mruthyavey

Akooapaaraaya Mahatey Namō Mandhara dhaariney

Kshityuddhaara vihaaraaya Namassookaramoortayey

Namasteydbhutasimhaaya Saadhulokabhayaapaha

Vaamanaaya Namastubhyam Kraantatribhuvanaayacha

Namō Bhruḡoonaampatayey Dushtakshatravacchidey

Namastey Raghuvaryaaya Raavaantakaraayacha

Namastey Vaasudevaaya Namassamkarshanaayacha

Pradyumnanaaniruddhaaya Saatvataam patayey

Namaha

Namassuddhaaya Buddhaaya Daitya daanava mohiney

Mleycchapraaya Kshatrahantrey Namastey

Kalkiroopiney

Bhagavan Jeevalokoyam Mohitastava-maayayaa

Ahammameytya sadgraaho Bhramyatey Karmavart-

masu."

"Salutations to you O Lord! Who took the shape of the Great Fish for the purpose of restoring the Vedas to Brahma, the Creator, from whom rudely they were taken by the giant Somakasura, strolling over the Ocean of Pralaya! My prayers are to you O Lord! who became Hayagreeva and who killed the terrible demons Madhu and Khaitabha! My salutations are to you who took the form of the Huge Tortoise to lift the Manthara mountain as it was about to sink while being used in the churning of the Milky Ocean to get Amritha. I surrender unto you who assumed the form of the Monstrous Boar to save the Earth from being

rolled off by the wicked and mighty Rakshasa Hiranyaksha. I make my obeisance to you, O Lord! who took the wonderful shape of the Man-Lion Lord Narasimha to kill Hiranyakasipu and protect the meek and the innocent from his vicious minions who put them to untold misery. I salute you who became Vamana to subjugate Bali and restore the regime of the Devas. I offer my salutations to you, O Lord! who as Parasurama rid the world of the vile kshatriya rulers who became godless and materialistic. I offer my respects to you who as Sri Rama killed Ravana. My salutations are to you, Vaasudeva, shining as Samkarshana the giver of Jnana and strength, brilliant as Pradyumna the giver of riches and vitality and radiant as Aniruddha the bestower of power and energy. I pay my tribute to your power of illusion which makes the giants your pliant tools. My prayers are to you, O Lord! who as Kalki would destroy the bad and the fierce and establish Dharma in Kali age. Overwhelmed by the Ego and being subject to your Maya, all creatures in the Universe revolve in births and deaths, performing various deeds and falling a prey thereto."

Akrura could now realise that Lord Krishna was Lord Mahavishnu Himself and that Balarama was Ananta Adishesha, His Couch. He continued his prayer and said: "O Lord! You are worshipped by the Yogins as the Mahapurusha. Those who aspire for things of the world perform sacrifices and other religious rites to attain you. The wise dedicate themselves whole-heartedly to your worship without any desire for themselves. In whatever way one might pray to you, you are One and One alone. All gods are merged in you. I am after all a speck in this ocean of samsara bound by desires and ignorance. I am of no consequence. Have compassion towards me, O

Lord! *Namaste Vaasudevaaya Sarvabhootakshaayacha Hrisheekesa Namastubhyam Prapannam Paahimaam Prabho!* Salutations are to you, Vaasudeva, the destroyer of all Elements! Prayers are to you, Hrisheekesa! I am your supplicant. Please protect me, O Lord!"

The Lord extended His protection and the glorious vision disappeared.

Akrura came back in an exalted mood to the chariot. There he found the two brothers in animated conversation as if oblivious of him. He approached them with great reverence and saluted them. Lord Krishna asked him about the abnormal delay he had made in performing his ablutions. He inquired of Akrura if he had seen anything so amazing as to have kept him so long away from them. Akrura said humbly: "What amazing things can be there you do not have and which you do not know, O Lord! You are the Omniscient Brahman. You are the Ultimate." The Lord blessed him and they proceeded to Mathura. Akrura felt elated and he was sure that Kamsa would meet with his end anon. It all happened as envisaged by the Unseen Voice of the Sky. Kamsa was killed by Lord Krishna, the eighth issue of Devaki and Vasudeva, and Dharma was established in the Yadava kingdom.

One day Lord Krishna accompanied by Balarama and Uddhava went to Akrura's house and sent him on a fact-finding mission to Hastinapura. He was asked to find out the exact state of affairs with regard to the Pandava Princes and report about the attitude of the blind king Dhritarashtra, their uncle, towards them. The Lord had chosen Akrura for the purpose as he was a votary of truth and would bring unvarnished account. The Lord had the

greatest confidence in Akrura's devotion to duty. Akrura felt highly honoured and blessed by the Lord. He fulfilled his mission successfully and won the appreciation of the Lord for it.

It so happened that one Yadava chieftain Satrajit by name got a brilliant gem called Syamantaka from the Sun-god. It had the power of giving gold in abundance to its possessor. Satrajit gave it to the safekeeping of his brother Prasena. The latter wore the gem and went for a hunt. He was killed by a lion. The gem was not found on his body. Satrajit made a false charge against Lord Krishna, saying that he was the person who alone could have taken it. The Lord felt sad at this senseless accusation. He realised that the false charge was the inevitable consequence of his having seen the Moon on the Chaviti Day without performing the ordained worship of Lord Vinayaka. He thereupon worshipped that Lord of Pranava and prayed for the removal of all obstacles in his search for Syamantaka to clear himself from the false charge made against him. He searched high and low for it and found it at last with Jambavan, the Bear-king, who had killed the lion that had made short work of Prasena and taken away Syamantaka with himself for his daughter Jambavati. The Lord had to battle for it with Jambavan who ultimately gave it to him along with his daughter realising that he had all along been fighting with the Lord who was Sri Rama himself. The Lord went back home taking the gem Syamantaka and Jambavati with him. He gave Syamantaka to Satrajit who felt ashamed of himself for having accused the Lord wrongly of having taken it. Satrajit repented for what he had done and in atonement gave his daughter Satyabhama in marriage to the Lord.

This roused the anger of Satadhanva, one of the Yadava chiefs, to whom she was originally promised by Satrajit. This occasion was availed of by Akrura and Kritavarma to fan the anger of Satadhanva further as they were sore at Satrajit for having dared to accuse their Lord falsely of having killed Prasena and taken Syamantaka. Satadhanva killed the sleeping Satrajit one day when the Lord was away at Hastinapura and took Syamantaka for himself. Lord Krishna learnt about it from the sorrowing Satyabhama and vowed to kill Satadhanva immediately. The latter was terror-stricken when he heard about it. He sought the help of Akrura and Kritavarma.

They refused to have anything to do with him for Lord Krishna was the Supreme Brahman and no one could stand against him. Satadhanva fled from Dwarka for dear life after hiding Syamantaka in the house of Akrura without his knowledge. Lord Krishna and Balarama, pursued him. Lord Krishna found him in the vicinity of Mithila and killed him. Syamantaka was not found with him. When Lord Krishna reported the matter to Balarama, the latter, though he knew the divinity of his brother, disbelieved him and rated him saying that he was lying and should have abstracted the gem for himself on account of greed. Such was the power of illusion of the Lord. Balarama deserted his brother and lived at Videhapura thereafter.

The Lord felt sad about the turn of events. He came to Dwaraka to make a vigorous search for Syamantaka in the houses of the friends of Satadhanva. In the meantime Akrura found the gem hidden in his house and he became terribly afraid. The horror and despair felt by him could not be described. He, a staunch devotee of the Lord, with the stolen article! What would the Lord think of

Him? He was sure that his fate was sealed. So without telling anyone he left the place along with Kritavarma taking the gem along with him. The Lord found that Syamantaka was nowhere to be found. Suddenly he remembered that Akrura had not so far made his appearance. He sent word for the latter. Akrura would not come. Sensing the truth the Lord had him compulsorily brought before him.

Lord Krishna then looked at him with compassion and asked him: "Why are you afraid of me? I think you are having Syamantaka with you. I know for certain that you had no hand in abstracting it wilfully. Please get the gem. I have to show it to all to clear my character. Even my brother suspects me about it." On hearing these words Akrura fell on his feet before the Lord. He narrated with tears in his eyes his part in the episode of Syamantaka and begged for forgiveness. The Lord assuaged his feelings and blessed him. Akrura got the gem and gave it to the Lord. The Lord showed it to all to dispel their doubts against him. He gave back Syamantaka to Akrura himself saying: "Akrura! You are the proper person to keep this gem. Do not worry about your part in the death of Satrajit. Fix your mind on me. You shall have salvation. Take this gem." Akrura prayed to the Lord in great ecstasy of mind and extolled his all merciful nature. He remained thereafter steadfast in this devotion to the Lord. He did not lose faith in the Lord when his wife was kidnapped by Sisupala, the reviler. He believed it to be an expiation for his sin against the Lord's kith and kin in having incited Satadhanva against Satrajit. Balarama came back to Dwaraka when he came to know the truth about Syamantaka. He apologised to his brother for having doubted his character. The Lord had said to Arjuna: "*Mama maayaa duratyayaa!*" "My power of illusion is irresistible!" The incarna-

tion of Ananta Adishesha himself blundered against the Lord with whom he moved very intimately. While so, why speak of Akrura? He made use of Syamanataka to give gifts to the poor and needy and thereby acquired name and fame as Daanapati, the master-giver of gifts. The Lord was pleased with him. He attained salvation. We can get the grace of the Lord in abundance likewise by praying to the Lord and discharging our duties properly even as Akrura had done. There is no doubt whatsoever about it.

UDDHAVA KRISHNA

(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandri-malai Swamīghal to gratify the desire of his disciples.)

Uddhava was Lord Krishna's devotee par excellence. He was always of Krishna, for Krishna, in Krishna and through Krishna. He chanted the Lord's name at all times under all circumstances in whatever state he was placed.

*Yaddinam Hari sallaapa kathaa peeyoosha varjitam
Taddinam durdinam manye Meghacchannam na
durdinam!*

That day which is bereft of conversation about the nectarlike lore of Sri Hari alone should be regarded as a bad day, and not a cloudy day, according to him. For him there was only one God and that was Lord Krishna.

*Vaasudevam parityajya Yonyamdevamupaasate
Trushitaa Jaahnaveeteere Koopam vaanchanti
durbhagah.*

To him, one who rejected Lord Vasudeva and worshipped other gods was like that miserable person who desired to drink water from a well to quench his thirst while the holy Ganges flowed beside him.

It was because of his complete surrender to the Lord that he was always kept near the Lord and he had the rarest

privilege of being present alongside of Him when He shed the mortal coil.

When the time for the Lord to leave the world approached, Lord Brahma and the other divinities came down to request Him to return to Sree Vaikuntha and bless them all. The Lord promised to do so after causing the destruction of the Yadavas and lessening the misery of Mother Earth. Uddhava came to know of it and hastened to the Lord with the prayer that he also should be permitted to accompany Him to Vaikuntha.

The Lord told him that he should live for some more time to come to spread the divine message of Jnana to all. He further said: "Within seven days from now on Dwarka would become submerged in the ocean and the Yadavas would die like flies fighting among themselves in the Prabhasateertha. Soon after I depart the age of Kali will set in. Under his aegis Adharma will reign supreme. So do not stay in this place. Leaving away all your ties of friendship, your attachments and your relations, go to the world moving about thinking of Me and treating all alike." Uddhava questioned the Lord as to how he could keep his mind balanced and impartial while looking at the world full of virtues and vices alike.

The Lord said in reply that one sees variety in things because of the conditioning his mind undergoes. One should note that whatever is thought of by the mind, whatever is seen by the eyes, whatever is heard by the ears and, in short, whatever is perceived by the senses (Indriyas) is all illusory and liable to decay. That they appear to be real, true and permanent, is so because they are all created by the mind. As long as the mind is unbridled, such

things exist. When the mind is arrested and immobilised, all these vanish. This is called *Maya* or illusion. This *Maya* makes one differentiate between things and find separateness and variety in them. This is unwisdom or *Aviveka*. As long as this *Aviveka* exists in a person, he or she cannot have any peace. So control of the mind which commands the senses is the first requisite for peace to obtain. Bind the mind; make it averse to the free play of the senses and contemplate on the Eternal Soul. As there is no one to command, the senses drop their pranks. The mind becomes full of the Soul and will be shut off from the illusion of the world. The world appears to be a nothingness then. It will appear to be pervaded by the Atman.

The Lord continued: "When once you attain that state, Truth lights on you and you will then perceive no difference between one being and another. You will feel all to be one and the same Atman. Then you will be beyond the ordinary. You will be innocent and free like a child, living in the world and yet out of its clutches. All human beings conduct themselves in the world according to the binding *Vasanas* or attachments that they had amassed in their cycles of births and deaths. These *Vasanas* are the result of the wavering of the mind. As the mind creates these *Vasanas*, they die a natural death when the mind becomes extinct. How do the *Vasanas* die then? The opposite *Vasanas* should be first encouraged to put them out and when they are no more existent, these opposing *Vasanas* also should be rejected. This should be understood first."

On hearing these words, Uddhava said that was the state of *sanyasa* which was beyond his reach and the reach

of the ordinary people who could not divest themselves of their fondness for their body and sense play. He wanted the Lord to give an easier way for salvation. The Lord alone could do so for the other divinities were His creation and were subject to Maya or illusion.

The Lord thereupon said to Uddhava that one should improve and better himself only by his own efforts. He might say that one should have a guide even for this purpose then. There was no better teacher than the Earth to one in this regard. "Examining the why and wherefore of the things, mobile and immodible, animate and inanimate, in the world rejecting the bad and electing the good, you should educate yourself and attain spiritual prominence and attain spiritual prominence leading to salvation", said the Lord. To expatiate this thesis He told Uddhava about the conversation between an Avadhuta and Yadu, a king.

The latter requested the saint to elucidate as to how he had reached that state of bliss and nonattachment. The Avadhuta said that he was able to get to that highest state of seeing the Lord in everything and enjoying supreme bliss only by perceiving everything and every aspect in the world which he had taken to be his Guru.

He learnt the qualities of endurance, forgiveness and a life of service to others from the Earth which, though ploughed, dug, broken and treated harshly and cruelly in diverse brutal ways, gave of its best to the people bearing their onslaughts and forgiving them with patience and in a spirit of service.

From the all-pervading wind he found that one takes in only that much of the wind as is required to sustain his life spirit. Even so one should control his palate and take in only what is necessary to keep himself alive and sound. Though the wind passes over everything it is not contaminated in its essential nature. From this fact he learnt about the presence of the Atman in all without any change in its essence and unaffected in any way by the body-vehicles in which it is situated. From the sky he learnt the oneness of all for it is present in the pot or in the mutt. He gleaned the truth that though the beings are different, the Atman in them is indivisible, same and one.

Water, being innately pure, purifies every one and quenches their thirst. From this fact he inferred that everyone should by his innate good nature make himself loved by everyone. He should be loved by all for his virtue and by his proper treatment of them.

Likewise he learnt from the fire that one should by his inherent brilliance take in whatever is offered and sublimate them by his contact and ability. Though the fire rises and falls in volume while burning things its quality and essence are the same. The firewood or sticks or things may become ash; but the fire is not sullied. So also though the Atman is in all varieties of beings, the births, deaths and other transformations do not affect it. Those things pertain only to those beings and not the Atman in them. Again fire has no shape. It assumes the shape or form according to the ingredients put into it and becomes useful to others. It has no desire to consume only particular things. All things are equally welcome to it. So also a person should take in anything edible given by others and should not

have by himself any particular attachment to particular types of food and dishes.

The Moon's phases grow and fall while the moon by itself does not undergo any change. From this the Avadhuta concluded that that emphasised the fact that birth, growth and death etc., brought about by Time are happening only to the body vehicles of the animate and not to the Atman inhabiting them.

From the Sun the sage learnt that the Atman is one and the same though it appears variegated and different in aspect and quality according to the beings in which it is seated. For the sun appears differently in different waters in pots, lakes, tanks and so on with his reflection in them varying according to their nature.

The pigeon couple who, having developed intense affection and attachment to their offspring, got themselves enmeshed in the fowler's net was an object lesson to him teaching the fact that one immersed in the worldly ties of family and subject to the control of the senses comes to grief even though he has attained the most beneficial human form which is the sure instrument for salvation.

The python which swallows those that come straight into its mouth without any movement on its part by itself and lives had made the Avadhuta know that one has to undergo the circumstances and suffering brought about by previous Karma and must be satisfied with whatever comes to him by the way. With this thought in mind he should concentrate on the Brahman.

The ocean which is deep, unmoved and indivisible taught the sage that one should be balanced and calm in

mind, neither swollen, nor down, and feel the perfect truth of the detached mind dwelling on Lord Narayana under all conditions and in all states.

The moths drawn to the burning lamp attracted by its light and burnt in it taught him the truth that one drawn by the allurements of the senses would fall a victim to the wheel of Samsara without any hope of redemption.

The bee gets honey from every flower, little or big. Likewise the Yogi goes from house to house and gets his sustenance taking one ball of food from each house. The Avadhuta felt that one should be like the bee getting the good out of all the sastras great or small.

The female elephant is used to entice the male and catch it. From this was concluded by him that women are to be avoided. The bee stores honey getting it from various sources. But the store is taken away suddenly by someone or other. From this was understood that one who stores away everything without enjoying its benefits would lose it to others.

Deer are caught by making use of the bait of the charming music of the flute which they like. This showed the fate of one who is lured by the attractions of the senses and tempting sounds. One who becomes the slave to the palate would go the way of the fish who fall a prey to the fisherman on account of that weakness.

The prostitute woman, Pingala by name, could not find even a single client eventhough she waited patiently till midnight. Then she got disgusted with her way of life and decided to dedicate herself to the service of the Lord. Observing her transformation, the Avadhuta learnt

that desire leads to destruction like the dangerous snake with poisonous fangs and successful extinction of desire lays the seed for all bliss.

A woodpecker could secure a piece of meat after great exertion. The other birds saw it and chased it to get hold of that piece. It ran helter-skelter, and hither and thither, and ultimately gave up its attempt and let go the meat, thus saving its life. From this was concluded that attachment to anything is a source of danger to one's happiness.

The innocent child is free from the cares of the world as to him the world has no meaning in that state. The Yogi is also free from the troubles of the world as he views the world as a mere emptiness. From this was understood the fact that one should be unaffected by the allurements of the world around him to get pure bliss.

In a village were a poor indigent couple who had a daughter to be married. Intending bridegrooms used to come and go away seeing their poverty. When once her parents were away some persons came to the house. To hide her poverty which might be revealed by the jingling of the bangles while pounding the paddy she broke her bangles one by one keeping only two in each hand and when even those bangles made sound she kept one bangle in each hand and pounded the paddy. Due to the subsiding of the noise of the bangles, what she was doing could not be fathomed by others. From this the sage learnt that quarrel is sure to erupt when there are a number of people, hot debates are sure to occur when there are two and singleminded and lone effort is necessary for cultivating concentration of mind and prospering in life.

A marksman stood steady at a place, controlled his breath and let off his arrow which hit the bull's eye. From this was understood that the Yogi should follow the lead of this shooter for developing singleminded attention.

The snake does not unite with another one and is very careful about its movement. It has no decided abode and it would get silently into any hole seen by it. Inference was made from this that sage should move alone, be careful, single and given to few words. There is no necessity for one to build palaces or huge buildings for the sake of housing this body which is liable to decay and life could be led in any shady place.

From the spider was learnt that the world comes out of the Lord and goes into him again in the same way as the web of the spider. This also proved that only the Lord is real and all other things are illusory.

The wasp gets a worm, puts it into the nest and turns round it. The worm looks with fear at its tormentor and its mind always dwells on what the wasp would do to it. By such concentrated attention, it itself becomes a wasp and flies away. In the same way the mind gets into that state upon which it concentrates. Hence those aspiring for union with the Highest should concentrate only on achieving that position. The mind should dwell on that state of pure bliss. This concentration should be in the mind of the individual at the time of shedding the mortal coil. For what one thinks of at the time of his exit from this world that he becomes at the next birth. For one to think of the Eternal Brahman at the time of death there should be incessant practice of such contemplation.

This practice could be had out of love, fear or hatred. Rishyasunga, Gajendra and Sisupala are examples to the point. Concentration on godhead is important and not the reason behind it. So the Avadhuta said to the king that those were his teachers.

The body is perishable however carefully one nurtures it. It is transitory and shortlived. Every individual is subject to the troubles brought about by the senses. But other than the human body there is no other means to attain godhead. The only method to overcome this difficulty is to surrender to God with devotion and love. With this idea the Avadhuta roamed about.

Stating this to Uddhava the Lord said to him that one should carry out his duties without any desire to enjoy the fruits thereof. He should not become a slave to his senses. He should carry out his swadharma with a sense of dedication to the Lord. The whole universe has Karma as its pivot. All are controlled by it. There is no defect in the Karma performed. The defect is in the idea with which it is performed. When it is desireless and performed according to swadharma, it is purified. Whatever Karma is done has to be done offering it at first at the feet of the Lord. The mind gets cleansed and becomes attuned to perform Karmas in that manner by means of knowledge of the Sastras, teachings of spiritual preceptors and company of holy men. The seeker after truth must be full of love for all, feel the urge for self-realisation intensely and never allow gossip. He has to cultivate equanimity of mind and feel that the same Atman is in every one. He can get rid of the power of delusion or Maya by complete *prapatti* or surrender to the Lord.

To further questions of Uddhava, the Lord gave an account of Hamsopadesa wherein he had assumed the form of a swan and delineated on how to control the senses and the mind on the prayer of Lord Brahma to illuminate Sanaka, Sanandana and other sons born out of his volition. He said that control of the senses could be had by turning the mind inward and directing it towards the Divine Light. He stated further that to Arjuna he had made Karma Yoga the main theme and to Uddhava he had made Bhakti Yoga as the main theme. The preceptor has to teach according to the capacity and mental equipment of the disciple. In Arjuna the quality of Rajas was more predominant than the quality of Sattwa so that he assumed independence of mind now and then and went even to the extent of questioning the Lord's wisdom. So to alleviate the Rajoguna in him, he was taught Nishkama Karma (desireless action). As Uddhava was full of Sattva guna and surrendered to the Lord even at the outset, he was taught Bhakti Yoga.

On hearing these words Uddhava was thrilled and prayed that his devotion to the Lord should always be at the highest pitch and the Lord should be with him eternally. Lord Krishna granted his prayer and directed him to go to Badarikasrama. Thus the Lord became Uddhava Krishna.

GUGGULU KALAYA NAYANAR

(Vouchsafed to my Adiyaan Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples)

*"Antakaantakaaya Paapahaarine Namassivaaya
Saanta Maaya Danticharmadhaarine Namaha
Santataasrita Vyathaa vidaarine Namaha
Jantujaata Nityasowkhyakaarine Namassivaaya!"*

I salute the Lord of Lords, Lord Siva, the extirpator of the god of death, the wiperout of sins, the wearer of the elephant skin, the controller of peace and maya, the eternal destroyer of the troubles and worries of those that throw themselves before him for succour and the Causative power giving everlasting bliss to all the animate including the animal kingdom.

Lord Siva's blissful deeds are indescribable. His devotees know how compassionate and loving is his care of them. They have no fear with the Lord always by their side to check anything untoward happening to them. But their faith in him should be firmly rooted. The seeming troubles should not detract their mind. They are only tests to see whether the devotees trust the Lord wholehog or whether there are any reservations. This is exemplified in the sacred lives of the Nayanars.

In the village of Tirukkadavoor there lived a devotee par excellence of the Lord Siva. He was called Kalayanar.

He was a pious brahmin always of the mind of the Lord. He used to burn incense at the temple of the Lord Amritaghateswara every day using the particular fragrant gum resin called "Guggulu". He never failed in this service and it earned for him the name of "Guggulu Kalayanar". He spent whatever little he had for purchasing that incense material. He became poor in course of time. However it did not deter him from his selfappointed duty of offering dhoopam of guggulu to the Lord. Even when he could not make both ends meet he continued his offering.

One day there was nothing in the house even for making food. He had already sold every thing he had including his parental property. His faith in the Lord was great. He sang:

*"Saranam Tarunendusekharassaranam Me Giriraja-
kanyakaa*

*Saranam punareva taavubhow Saranam naanyadu-
paimi deivatam!"*

"My sole refuge is the Lord adorned with the crescent Moon in the head and his divine spouse Parvati Devi and I salute them again and again. No other deity is my prop other than Lord Siva and Mother Girija."

His wife gave him her Mangala sootra of gold and asked him to get food for the family by selling it. He took it and was on his way to the market. Then he saw a merchant with a bag of guggulu incense. Kalayanar was beside himself with extreme joy. Gone was his thought of buying food. He purchased the whole bag of incense and went to the temple awaiting the time for service. He forgot his wife and children and remained in meditation of the Lord.

He prayed:

*"Siva Sarvaga Sarva Sarmada prantato Deva dayaam
kurushva Me!
Nama Easwara Naatha Dikpathe Punarevesa
Namonamostute!"*

He praised the Lord of Lords who is omnipresent animating every thing in cosmos and who is an ocean of mercy and deeply contemplated upon him.

In the meantime it became night. The wife of Kalayanar waited for her husband till late in the night and fell asleep with her hungry children. Lord Siva took pity on them and under his instruction Kubera, the God of Wealth, filled the house with gold, money and all provisions for food in plenty. The Lord appeared to her in her dream and told her to get up for he had filled their house with untold riches and there was no need for her to feel depressed. The lady woke up with a start and her joy knew no bounds. She praised the Lord for his limitless mercy towards them. She was on pins and needles to welcome her husband. Here the Lord found the Nayanar in his devout service unmindful of anything else. Pleased with his single minded devotion he directed Kalayanar to go home as he was hungry and his wife was waiting at home with a sumptuous repast prepared for him. Hearing the unseen divine voice Kalayanar came home. He was astounded at the mercy shown to him by the Lord who had bestowed limitless riches on him. He prayed:

*"Mahaadeva Sambho Gireesa Trisoolin Tvayedam
samastam vibhaateeti Yasmaat Sivaadanyathaa deivam
me naabhijaanaati Sivoham Sivoham Sivoham Sivoham!"*

He felt the Lord to be in him. He would not reckon any other deity as God. Only Mahadeva Sambhu the Lord of Uma and the wielder of the trident who aimates the whole creation was his Lord. He was of Siva and Siva only. He did not become proud as a consequence of his riches. He remained the same ardent devotee of the Lord well disposed and kind towards the poor and the needy and offering as was his wont the daily dhoopam of guggulu to the Lord with redoubled faith and fervour.

As time went on, an event occurred at the Sivakshetra of Tiruppanandaal. The Linga of the Siva temple there was found leaning to one side instead of being erect. The Chola monarch who saw it wanted to set it straight and offer worship. He tried to do so using mighty elephants and even his whole army. The Linga would not budge. Those who tried to pull it fell down unconscious. The elephants also shared the same fate. The king became very sad and mentally afflicted. He was miserable and despondent.

The news came to the ears of Kalayanar. He wanted to see the Linga himself and relieve the sorrow of the king. He took the permission of the Lord of the temple at Tirukkadavoor and came to Tiruppanandaal. On seeing the Linga he was filled with intense devotion and he prepared himself to make it straight with the Lord's blessings. He tied a rope to the Linga put it round his neck and pulled it with all his might praying to the Lord all the while:

*"Dooreekrutaani duritaani duraksharaani
dowrbhagya dhukka durahankruti durvachaansi
Saaram Tvadeeya charitam Gowreesa
maamiha samuddhara satkataakshaih!"*

He praised the Lord who could wipe out all bad things of destiny and shower all prosperity, happiness and selfless progress on his devotees. The exploits of the Lord were the best and the sweetest and he would protect his devotees with the least look of divine Love. Kalayanar prayed for the least look of mercy of the Lord for the success of his mission. Lo! the Linga became erect. The Lord listened to his prayer. The celestials showered flowers on him. The king fell flat before the Nayanar who had achieved the impossible task. He worshipped the Lord. He now knew the power of Bhakti Paasa which could pull the Lord himself towards the devotee and make him do anything for the latter without any reservation. Kalayana Nayanar left for his native place and continued his daily routine of offering guggulu dhoopam to the Lord with total surrender. He had the immense good fortune of offering his tribute and respects to the two eminent Nayanars, Tirugnana Sambandhar and Appar, who came to his abode to bless him. He spent the remaining part of his dedicated life happily with his mind on the Lord and finally attained residence in Kailas. Eternal bliss is sure to be gifted to one who completely surrenders to the Lord, the annihilator of the god of death.

So let us pray:

"Pade pade sarvatamonikruntanam

Pade pade sarvasubhapradaayakam

Pradakshinam bhaktiyutena chetasaa

karomi Mrutyunjaya Raksha raksha maam!"

O Lord Mrutyunjaya! the dispeller of all darkness and the giver of all blissful things! I go round and round your form with unstinted devotion of mind. Protect me! Protect me!

ARIVAATTAAYA NAYANAR

(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples)

*"Sailaraajasya Jaamaatassasirekhaavatamsaka
Namastubhyam namastubhyam namastubhyam
Maheswara!
Namonamo namastubhyam bhooyobhooyo namona-
maha
Mahyam Sarvaatmanaakaamaan prayaccha prayaccha
Parameswara!"*

O Lord Maheswara! Son-in-law of the king of the mountains, Himavan! having the moongod in the head! I salute you thrice. I salute you thrice to protect us. Please gratify the desires of all.

Lord Parameswara is the sure gratifier of the desires of his devotees. But he tests every devotee to the extreme extent and finds out whether he is really of his mind and would go to any extent for him in worship before deigning to fulfil his desires. If one surrenders wholehog to him without any reservation, he would give him anything to any limit.

There was a velama called Daaya belonging to a noble family of kshatriya soldiers of repute in the place called Ganamangala in the Chola country. He was very rich. He was however not proud of his position. He was

always of the mind of Lord Siva and all his acts were for the Lord. He was like the devotee who prayed:

*"Vachasaa charitam vadaami Sambhorahamudyo-
gavidhaasuteprasaktaha
Manasaakrutimeeswarasya seve siras aachaiva
Sadaasivam Namaami!"*

"I pray to Lord Sadaasiva. I will utter the accounts of the Lord with my mouth, speak of him while in service, think of him in my daily duties and bend my head before him in worship". He was permeated by the Sivatatva. It was his practice every day to take to the temple fine rice and fresh vegetables and offer them to the Lord in daily worship. This practice he continued with great devotion and sense of dedication. After some time he became poor by a trick of fate. Yet he did not stop his daily supply to the Lord. He prayed to the Lord:

*"Yatkrutyam tannakrutyam yadakrutyam
krutyavattadaacharitam
Ubhayohprayaschittam Siva tava
naamaaksharayoccharitam"*

"O Lord Siva! the atonement for both the acts of not performing what should be performed and of performing what should not be performed in the worship of your divine feet lies in speaking of the glory of the history of the two-lettered name "Siva" of yourself."

When he could not afford to offer fine rice, he gave rough rice and when there were no vegetables, he offered vegetable leaves with the above feeling in his mind. When even these leaves were not available, he offered pure water to the Lord. His wife always stood by him in his

service to the Lord. One day after great difficulty he and his wife could obtain some vegetables for offering the Lord and were on their way to the temple. As Daaya was famished not having had even a morsel of food for some days, he fell down due to weakness of body. The vegetables which he was carrying were scattered on the ground. When his wife revived him after due care, he found the vegetables strewn on the ground. He said that they were not fit to be offered to the Lord as they had become scattered and dirty. He cried out: "I haven't been able to offer to the Lord things got after so much of trouble. What is the use of this wretched life when I cannot serve the Lord". He took his dagger to put an end to his life. Lord Maheswara was pleased with the unsullied devotion of the man and appeared before him in full splendour along with the divine mother Parvati. He prevented the devotee from killing himself. He gave salvation to the couple taking them along with him to Kailas. As Daaya refused to offer scattered things fallen on earth to the Lord he was known as "Arivaattaaya Nayanar" and he became the doyen of Nayanars worshipped by every devotee of Lord Siva.

Om Tatsat!

THE YOGA OF SAULABHYA

(Vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandri-malai Swamighal to gratify the desire of his disciples)

The Yoga of Saulabhya is the easiest step for liberation in Kali-Age. The yoga enables an individual to get out of the shackles of Samsara, whatever be his lapses and shortcomings, by clinging steadfastly to the feet of the Sad-Guru, whose blessings will far outweigh his demerits and earn for him salvation. A Sad-Guru is the embodiment of Saulabhya (the Lord's attribute of making friendship with His devotees). Lord Rama gave Moksha to Jatayu and Sabari. Though born in the lowly tribe of hunters, Sabari displayed remarkable Guru-Bhakthi towards Sage Matanga and did service to him. Whoever understands the principle of Acharya-Bhakthi and firmly commits himself to it is deemed to be a learned one (Dharma-Nipunaam).

God, Guru and Self are identical. These different names connote one Infinite Reality. The creative, protective and destructive principles of the cosmos are represented by the Trinity of Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Their personification results in the tremendous manifestation of power. These mighty streams of power converge and blaze forth in the Sad-Guru, the plenitude of divine love and dazzling glory of spiritual perfection. The three paths of spirituality namely, Knowledge,

Devotion and Action, converge at Sad-Guru's Lotus Feet and symbolize their respective excellences in a powerful combination of highest spiritual grandeur.

The Knowledge of the Self is the gift of the Sad-Guru. It means revelation of Sad-Guru's divinity in the heart of the seeker. Knowledge is innate in man. It is revealed only to the intellect purified by "tapasya" of the disciple and the touch of the Master. The recipient of the knowledge will see the reflection of the Sad-Guru in everybody and in everything. But there should be surrender to the Guru and such surrender should be of an exclusive type which has its basis on the firm conviction that there is no higher power superior to the Sad-Guru and that there is none other than Sad-Guru. The all embracing love in Sad-Guru can evoke the spirit of mystic devotion in the hearts of disciples. The subtle power of supreme wisdom and the rare charm of universal love which the Master embodies will be revealed as the disciple advances in the yoga.

The yoga is for the spiritualization of the mental life of the disciple. This presupposes dwelling in self awareness. Where there is the slightest trace of egoism, taint of desire tendency to passion like anger, there knowledge cannot dawn. To instill the great spirit of devotion in the disciples, the Sad-Guru reveals the perfect pattern of an ideal life for the spiritual aspirant. The Master also lives the life of a perfect Sadhaka. The exemplary life of the Guru is symbolic of the great Dharma on which the great cosmic system itself is made to rest and function.

The Guru hears all our prayers observes all our actions understands all our motives and reads all our

thoughts, for the Master is nearer to us than our minds. He is the eternal witness enthroned in our hearts. Being aware of this the disciple ties his mind to the Guru's feet with the silken cord of devotion. The Guru eternally showers His grace. Meditation on Guru's feet takes the seeker to the region of the attributeless Brahman.

There is no Vaikunta, no Goloka, no Kailas and no Brahmaloka greater than the place where Guru lives. The physical body of the Guru should not be considered as a perishable physical frame made up of five elements but should be considered as God. It is good to respect all Gurus for the Guru is one even though he appears in diverse forms. But that form in which he has appeared to enlighten the seeker deserves the supreme adoration and worship.

The Pandavas had absolute belief in Sri Krishna's God-hood. Sri Krishna did not mince words in declaring either His God-hood or his "Abhaya Vachana" to his devotees. Apart from His Divinity, the Lord endowed Himself with a maddening beauty and led those fortunate Gopis to a sweet oblivion of contemplation and consequential silence.

If men were not satisfied with the elevating transformation, He had miracles galore to His credit. At one and the same time He gave audience at two different places. Besides, he showed his Viswarupa to Duryodhana. When Brahma stole his cattle to cut Krishna to his size, the Lord assumed the forms of the cattle and Gopakas for a full term of one year and none in the Govaraj could see what had happened. Brahma was aghast at this fantastic feat and ate the humble pie! Again when mother Yasodha

chided the child, Krishna opened His mouth for His mother's inspection to buttress His denial of having eaten any mud. She saw to her astonishment the entire Universe whirling in the child's mouth.

Out of infinite compassion, the Guru condescends to share our joys and sorrows. But we must be aware, lest the truth of the supreme divinity of the Sad-Guru should leave our mind. The whole world may try to bind us but the Guru alone liberates. Guru is God, for the Lord out of His infinite compassion for mankind descends to live amidst ailing ignorant humanity to impart light to it, in its hour of darkness and gloom. Such descents are the Avatars of the Lord. The purpose of the incarnation is not mainly the destruction of the wicked and the protection of the good, but to show the path of righteousness.

What in Kritayuga people attained by meditation (Dhyana), in Tritayuga by sacrifice (Yagas), in Dwapara-yuga by worship (Upasana) people attain that, in Kaliyuga singing the names of Sad-Guru, for Guru is God.